

**A Thesis Submitted for the Degree of PhD at the University of Warwick**

**Permanent WRAP URL:**

<http://wrap.warwick.ac.uk/88357>

**Copyright and reuse:**

This thesis is made available online and is protected by original copyright.

Please scroll down to view the document itself.

Please refer to the repository record for this item for information to help you to cite it.

Our policy information is available from the repository home page.

For more information, please contact the WRAP Team at: [wrap@warwick.ac.uk](mailto:wrap@warwick.ac.uk)

**Shifting Identities: An Examination of French Caribbean  
Texts in Translation**

**by**

**Sarah Victoria Scales  
MA (Cantab), MA, PGCE**

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements  
for the degree of  
Doctor of Philosophy in French Studies

University of Warwick, French Studies  
School of Modern Languages and Cultures

April 2016

<b>ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS .....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>DECLARATION .....</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>ABSTRACT.....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>CHAPTER 1 .....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>MARTINICAN LITERATURE AND ITS RELATIONSHIP TO (POSTCOLONIAL) TRANSLATION THEORY .....</b>	<b>4</b>
INTRODUCTION .....	4
HISTORICAL CONTEXT - FROM COLONIZATION TO DEPARTMENTALIZATION.....	17
THEORETICAL CONTEXT – TRANSLATION STUDIES AND POSTCOLONIAL STUDIES, AND THEIR INTERSECTION .....	37
<b>CHAPTER 2 .....</b>	<b>69</b>
<b>AN ANALYSIS OF THE TRANSLATIONS OF FRANTZ FANON’S <i>PEAU NOIRE, MASQUES BLANCS</i> (1952) .....</b>	<b>69</b>
INTRODUCTION .....	69
AN APPLICATION OF A BINARY MODEL OF TRANSLATION THEORY .....	70
THEORETICAL APPLICATION IN TEXTUAL ANALYSIS .....	72
TOWARDS A MODEL OF INTERCULTURAL TRANSLATION IN FURTHER EXAMINATIONS OF <i>PEAU NOIRE, MASQUES BLANCS</i> .....	82
THE APPLICATION OF PYM’S MODEL OF INTERCULTURAL TRANSLATION TO THE TRANSLATIONS .....	83
THE APPLICATION OF GLISSANT’S THEORY OF RELATION TO THE TRANSLATIONS .....	88
CONCLUSION.....	96
SECTION 2: AN EXAMINATION OF THE DIFFERENT APPROACHES AT WORK IN TRANSLATIONS OF <i>LES DAMNÉS DE LA TERRE</i> (1961).....	98
INTRODUCTION .....	98
A CONSIDERATION OF THE TRANSLATIONS BY CONSTANCE FARRINGTON (1968) AND RICHARD PHILCOX (2004) OF <i>LES DAMNÉS DE LA TERRE</i> .....	99
THE INFLUENCE OF PARATEXT IN READING FANON.....	108
THE TRANSLATION OF MEANING AND INTENT IN SARTRE’S PREFACE TO <i>LES DAMNÉS DE LA TERRE</i> .....	114
CONCLUSION - THE IMPLICATIONS OF THE WIDESPREAD REPERCUSSIONS OF SARTRE’S PREFACE AND MULTIPLE TRANSLATIONS OF <i>LES DAMNÉS DE LA TERRE</i> ON THE REPUTATION OF FRANTZ FANON .....	117
<b>CHAPTER 3 .....</b>	<b>120</b>
<b><i>CHRONIQUE DES SEPT MISÈRES, SOLIBO MAGNIFIQUE, TEXACO</i> AND THE USE OF GLISSANT’S THEORY OF RELATION TO EXAMINE THEIR TRANSLATIONS .....</b>	<b>120</b>
CHOICE OF SOURCE LANGUAGE TEXTS .....	120
METHODOLOGY.....	124
WHO AND WHAT IS THE ‘MARQUEUR DE PAROLES’? .....	133
OVERVIEW AND CONTEXTUALIZATION OF <i>CHRONIQUE DES SEPT MISÈRES, SOLIBO MAGNIFIQUE</i> AND <i>TEXACO</i> .....	140
<i>CHRONIQUE DES SEPT MISÈRES</i> – TRANSLATION ANALYSIS.....	153
<i>SOLIBO MAGNIFIQUE</i> – TRANSLATION ANALYSIS .....	164
<i>TEXACO</i> – TRANSLATION ANALYSIS .....	172
CONCLUSION.....	180
<b>CHAPTER 4 .....</b>	<b>184</b>
<b>MAYOTTE CAPÉCIA AND THE LIMITS OF TRANSLATION.....</b>	<b>184</b>
INTRODUCTION .....	184
MAYOTTE CAPÉCIA AND FRANTZ FANON.....	200
IDENTITY IN TRANSLATION .....	223
CONCLUSION.....	237
<b>CONCLUSION .....</b>	<b>241</b>
<b>BIBLIOGRAPHY .....</b>	<b>253</b>
PRIMARY LITERATURE.....	253
SECONDARY LITERATURE .....	254
OTHER WORKS CONSULTED .....	265

## Acknowledgements

I am very fortunate that both my academic and personal life is populated by wonderful people, to whom I wish to offer my deepest gratitude here for their friendship and support throughout the process of researching and writing up my thesis.

Firstly, to my supervisor Professor Pierre-Philippe Fraiture, whose support throughout has been unstinting, constant and enthusiastic. I feel extremely privileged to have had someone as kind and knowledgeable as a guide.

To all those I met at conferences and seminars, and with whom I discussed my work, and Translation and Postcolonial Studies in general. I would like to especially thank Dr Kathryn Batchelor, Professor Charles Forsdick and Dr Claire Macleod Peters, whose comments have helped refine my arguments and broaden my thinking. I am particularly grateful to Claire, whose advice in the latter stages of writing up the thesis was greatly appreciated. My sincere thanks, too, to Dr Claire Bisdorff, for sharing her PhD thesis with me.

To my friends at the University of Warwick, in particular, Merryn Everitt and Hannah Grayson for providing fun and moral support in equal measure, and to Philippe le Goff, whose friendship, good humour and renditions of ‘Tiny Dancer’ kept me motivated through many afternoons of writing.

To my parents, Andrew and Barbara, and sister, Sophie, who have always been consistent in their love and encouragement.

Finally, to my husband, David, who brings me sunshine.

This work is dedicated to the memory of my grandmother, May, who loved to read.

## **Declaration**

This thesis is submitted to the University of Warwick in support of my application for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

It has been composed by myself and has not been submitted in any previous application for any degree.

## Abstract

This thesis draws on the rapid development of scholarship in both Translation Studies and Postcolonial Studies in recent times and seeks to explore the interdisciplinary overlap between them with a study of English translations of French Caribbean texts of a Martinican origin. The thesis corpus focuses on three well-known Martinican writers and an examination of their key texts. The authors were chosen in order to deconstruct the mythologization of these texts and identity in translation, particularly considering how in some instances misrepresentations have come to be embedded in the anglophone understanding of the texts. The corpus consists of Frantz Fanon's texts *Peau noire, masques blancs* (1952) and its translations by Charles Lam Markmann (1967) and Richard Philcox (2008) and *Les Damnés de la terre* (1961) and its translations by Constance Farrington (1963) and Richard Philcox (2004); Patrick Chamoiseau's novels *Chronique des sept misères* (1986), translated by Linda Coverdale (1999), *Solibo magnifique* (1988), and *Texaco* (1992) both translated by Rose-Myriam Réjouis and Val Vinokurov (1999 and 1998, respectively); and Mayotte Capécia's novelette *Je suis Martiniquaise* (1948), translated by Beatrice Stith Clark (1997).

This study is important because of the approach taken in examining these canonical texts and therefore provides an original contribution to knowledge in several ways. Firstly, the purpose of the translation analysis is to ascertain if Western translation strategies tend to prevail, even when translating texts from a different socio-cultural background. Secondly, by using this analysis, we can then assess the degree to which the identity of both the source language text and, to an extent, the author have been manipulated for the purposes of appealing to the target language readership and market. Thirdly, I then propose both an alternative methodology for examining Caribbean texts in translation using Édouard Glissant's theory of Relation as a foundation, and also a reading of the concept of 'translation' that extends beyond the linguistic to take in ethnography and transformation of the Self, with both approaches exploring the concept of identity and how it is created in both source and target language text.

My findings indicate that, although in theory, Translation Studies is moving away from a primarily Western, binary appreciation of translation strategies, this movement has not yet manifested itself meaningfully in the practice of translation. This establishes that these Caribbean depictions of identity have been modified to appeal to a Western anglophone target market. However, a fully developed Caribbean focused translation theory has also not yet been put forward, nor indeed, a translation theory that focuses on the practice, rather than the theory of translation, thus demonstrating areas open to future scholarship and study.

# Chapter 1

## Martinican Literature and its Relationship to (Postcolonial) Translation Theory

### Introduction

When reading prefaces and introductions to recent translation theory texts written by established translation theorists and some of the early pioneers of the academic discipline, such as Edwin Gentzler, Douglas Robinson, Susan Bassnett, André Lefevere and Lawrence Venuti, who often express a degree of surprise or amazement that Translation Studies, which has ‘existed only since 1983 as a separate entry in the *Modern Language Association International Bibliography*’,<sup>1</sup> has developed, and indeed frequently redeveloped, so rapidly and broadly. From its beginning in the 1980s when ‘the field was trying to set itself free from the dominance of the source-text oriented theories’<sup>2</sup> the interest in Translation Studies has quickly grown in many unexpected directions, and, as Gentzler wrote in 2001 in the second edition preface of *Contemporary Translation Theories*, ‘if we have learned anything in translation studies over the past eight years, it is that the old theories and models do not necessarily apply.’<sup>3</sup>

Translation Studies can now claim institutional and international relevancy both in and of itself, and also from an interdisciplinary perspective due to the pertinent concepts of the ethics of relationships between languages and cultures it

---

<sup>1</sup> Edwin Gentzler, *Contemporary Translation Theories, Revised 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition*, (Clevedon et al.: Multilingual Matters Ltd, 2001), p. 1.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid. p. xi.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid. p. x.

embodies and how these in turn influence human relationships (although in practice, this interdisciplinarity is perhaps often easier said than done). Indeed, Lawrence Venuti notes that because of the far reaching scope of Translation Studies, ‘the data and ideas have informed discussions of translation outside of academia, and the popular media, in government agencies, and in various kinds of cultural institutions, among writers and translators.’<sup>4</sup> And Bassnett and Lefevere emphasize the fact that translation, as a form of rewriting, can reflect on and help make sense of the changing world around us,

Rewriting can introduce new concepts, new genres, new devices and the history of translation is the history also of literary innovation, of the shaping power of one culture upon another. But rewriting can also repress innovation, distort and contain, and in an age of ever increasing manipulation of all kinds, the study of the manipulative processes of literature as exemplified by translation can help us towards a greater awareness of the world in which we live.<sup>5</sup>

However, despite the understanding of translation’s use in challenging cultural and linguistic norms, up until very recently, it could be argued that the very framework of Western academia itself has held a mirror up to its imperial past in the manner in which academic departments were structured. Both Translation Studies and, indeed, Postcolonial Studies have experience of existing within English Literature and Language departments and programmes. This is problematic for a number of reasons. Firstly, given the preponderance of literature translated from English into other languages, to place Translation Studies into an English departmental context is to once again implicitly foreground the dominance of the English language.<sup>6</sup> Gentzler warns against the

---

<sup>4</sup> Lawrence Venuti, *The Translator’s Invisibility – A History of Translation* (London and New York: Routledge, 2008), p. ix.

<sup>5</sup> *Translation, History and Culture*, ed. by Susan Bassnett and André Lefevere (London and New York: Pinter Publishers, 1990), p. ix.

<sup>6</sup> Whilst this is currently true of the position of Translation Studies at the University of Warwick, on a broader institutional level many MA Translation Studies programs are frequently administrated under the umbrella of a School of Modern Languages, or a variation on a School of



possibility of a sense of Western, academic exclusivity growing up around Translation Studies, noting that, ‘as the translation theories outlined in this book [*Contemporary Translation Theories*, 2001] become more and more complex, they seem to gain more and more support from academia, which, in turn, also enhances their power to exclude.’<sup>7</sup> This is of particular interest when considering Translation Studies in a postcolonial context, and chimes with one of the main concerns of this thesis, namely, considering the possibility of the development of a postcolonial translation theory that does not begin from a Western perspective. Secondly, to study Postcolonial Studies in a similar academic context also runs the risk of presenting a biased account of the process of postcolonial history and commemoration. Thirdly, the fact that their institutional positions within the academy are contentious is testament to the liminal positions (both actual and metaphorical) that both disciplines inhabit both inside and outside the academic environment.

Both Translation Studies and Postcolonial Studies deal with identity politics, power transfer and the movement of and between languages, people, politics and culture. Therefore, particularly with reference to Translation Studies, the creation a set of immovable standards by which to measure work is impossible. Indeed, Bassnett and Lefevere point out that, ‘the production of different translations at different times does not point to any “betrayal” of absolute

---

Languages and Cultures. A small sample of UK universities reveals that this is the case at the Universities of Birmingham, Bristol, Durham, Manchester, Nottingham and Sheffield, and Queen’s University, Belfast. At the University of Surrey Translation Studies is to be found in the School of English and Languages, whilst the University of Leeds and UCL, amongst others, have their own Centre for Translation Studies.

<sup>7</sup> Gentzler, *Contemporary Translation Theories*, p. 4.

standards, but rather to the absence, pure and simple, of any such standards.’<sup>8</sup>

Yet, despite the fact that Bassnett and Lefevere set out these clear parameters that translation cannot be bounded by fixed standards, certain methods and translation strategies (for example, a dualist approach to translation theory) have ironically persisted, demonstrating a certain difficulty in moving away from these translation norms, and attempts to do so will be examined in Chapters 2 and 3 of this thesis.

Furthermore, with translation now considered a locus for intercultural exchange, rather than simply a binary method of transferring information from Language A to Language B, we must also be aware of the past role that translation played in colonialism and of the present connotations that certain translation norms and practices may have. Robinson notes that,

[...] translation has been used to control and ‘educate’ and generally shape colonized populations in the past; translation in the present remains steeped in the political and cultural complexities of postcoloniality; and one of the hopes of postcolonial translation studies is that translation might open new and productive avenues for the future.<sup>9</sup>

The cultural turn in translation spoken of by Bassnett and Lefevere (1990) thus plays a crucial role in the examination of translations in a postcolonial context. This is because of the influence that language has on cultural production, and vice versa, and the manipulation of one or the other that can occur through rewriting. As we have already seen, colonial ‘rewritings’ of history and culture and linguistic manipulations were major factors in shaping colonial interactions with the local populations, and the interdisciplinary approach of postcolonial Translation Studies permits an examination of what exactly it means when a

---

<sup>8</sup>Bassnett and Lefevere (eds.), *Translation, History and Culture*, p. 5.

<sup>9</sup> Douglas Robinson, *Translation and Empire – Postcolonial Theories Explained* (Manchester: St. Jerome, 1997), p. 6.

postcolonial writer takes back the language imposed upon them by the colonizer for their own communicative and literary purposes. However, when examining the corpus texts and translations, we must also be wary of subsuming culture into what we mean when we talk about language, remembering them as distinct entities that are nonetheless closely bound up with the production and understanding of the other.

Traditionally, translation scholars have started with language, with the differences between languages, and with the difficulties attendant upon conveying messages from one language to the new syntactic, semantic and pragmatic systems of another. The cultural underpinnings of language have never been forgotten, of course, but until fairly recently they have been set to one side, regarded as peripheral to the study of translation, or at best somehow 'encoded' into linguistic systems so that to study language *is* to study culture.<sup>10</sup>

Therefore, the overlap between Translation Studies and Postcolonial Studies demands closer attention and, following the early explorations of Tejaswini Niranjana and Vicente Rafael, has for some time now been addressed by such critics as Susan Bassnett and Harish Trivedi, Paul F. Bandia and Celia Britton.<sup>11</sup> A postcolonial approach to Translation Studies grants an exploration of both cultural and linguistic aspects of a text, given the close connection between culture and language in this particular context. Furthermore, the metaphor of translation has been frequently invoked with reference to postcolonial texts

---

<sup>10</sup> Robinson, *Translation and Empire*, p. 2 (emphasis in original).

<sup>11</sup> See Tejaswini Niranjana, *Siting Translation: History, Post-structuralism and the Colonial Context* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992), Vicente Rafael, *Contracting Colonialism: Translation and Christian Conversion in Tagalog Society under Early Spanish Rule* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1988), *Postcolonial Translation – Theory and Practice*, ed. by Susan Bassnett and Harish Trivedi (London and New York: Routledge, 1999), *Writing and Translating Francophone Discourse: Africa, The Caribbean, Diaspora*, ed. by Paul F. Bandia (Amsterdam and New York: Rodopi, 2014), Celia Britton, *Édouard Glissant and Postcolonial Theory: Strategies of Language and Resistance* (Charlottesville and London: University Press of Virginia, 1999).

The growing interest in the interdisciplinary potential of Translation Studies is reflected in the AHRC funded theme 'Translating Cultures' which seeks to examine, through the multiple ways in which translation can take place, and by drawing together examinations of translation in theory

because of the desire to move away from rigid, limiting and traditional postcolonial, and indeed, translational binarisms. Bandia notes,

much like in Anglophone postcolonial studies, the discourse seems to have been cast in immovable and fast binarisms of 'us' versus 'them', the colonized versus the colonizer, the metropole versus the postcolony, centre versus periphery, and so on and so forth. Writers and artists from the postcolony have claimed the right to use French as a language of creation but shaped to suit their own historical and sociocultural circumstances.<sup>12</sup>

My principal aim for this thesis echoes that of Bandia in the introduction to *Writing and Translating Francophone Discourse* (2014) when he writes that he wishes to 'pave the way to a multidimensional approach to translation phenomena reflective of the pluralism characteristic of contemporary francophone culture.'<sup>13</sup> Moreover, my original contribution to scholarship in this thesis is to focus on the development of a greater understanding of what it entails culturally, linguistically, ethically and politically for Western translators to work on Caribbean texts using established Western translation methods. By examining francophone Caribbean literature predominantly translated by US translators, I seek to pinpoint what the writers' plural linguistic and cultural identity is and how it is portrayed in translation. By proposing alternative translation methods for translating this literature, I aim to determine how to maintain this identity in Anglophone translation. Indeed, this work builds on previous suggestions that, 'rather than dwelling on notions of *equivalence* and *fluency* in translation, postcolonial translation studies is mainly concerned with investigating the impact of translation on a colonized source culture, and the consequences for a

---

<sup>12</sup> Paul F. Bandia, 'Introduction' in *Writing and Translating Francophone Discourse: Africa, The Caribbean, Diaspora*, ed. by Paul F. Bandia (Amsterdam and New York: Rodopi, 2014), pp.1-17, p. 3.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid. p. 4.

homogenizing or colonizing language culture.’<sup>14</sup> It was also considered important to ground the thesis in textual analysis, rather than only situating the arguments within a theoretical framework because this allows a meaningful engagement with the translation methodology, and underscores the need for a practical revalorization of the role of theory in Translation Studies.

Bearing in mind the importance of the foregrounding of the ‘pluralism characteristic of francophone culture’ I focus attention in this thesis on the work of writers born in Martinique. The colonization of Martinique by France in 1635, the importation of African slaves to work on the island, the development of the *mulatto* and *béké* social groups during colonialism, the introduction of the assimilation policy which encouraged the use of French and dominance of French culture, and the eventual ‘decolonization’ by way of departmentalization in 1946<sup>15</sup> make for a very specific set of historical circumstances which provide a unique framework in the Caribbean for cultural and linguistic, and hence literary development. The multiethnic dimension of the country (for French colonizers imported not only slaves from many different countries and tribes, but also indentured workers from India and China) and multilingualism through the use of both French and Creole (albeit in a tightly hierarchical social framework)

---

<sup>14</sup> Paul F. Bandia, ‘Postcolonialism and translation: the dialectic between theory and practice’, *Linguistica Antverpiensia*, 0.2 (2003), 129-142, p.129 (emphasis in original).

<sup>15</sup> Gary Wilder examines this particular form of decolonization in *Freedom Time: Negritude, Decolonization, and the Future of the World* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2015). See especially pp. 1-16, pp. 106-132 and pp. 241-260. Wilder explores Césaire’s role in Martinican cultural and political life, and the negotiations for departmentalization, and unpicks the assumed contradictions between his poetry and politics. He notes, ‘rather than reject modernity from the standpoint of primordial Africanity, Césaire imagined an alternative process of modernization whereby the communal and democratic possibilities that inhered within African civilizations could be nourished through noncoercive forms of contact with Europe. [...] The challenge was how to transcend both current colonialism and traditional society without erecting rigid boundaries between Europe and Africa and the Antilles – to find the political form that would best enable this true humanism.’ (p. 129).

provide a particularly fruitful background against which to study and situate the translation of writing from a Caribbean origin. Each chapter of the thesis explores key Western translation methods and assesses their usefulness in the context of a cultural and linguistic analysis of the specific translation format.

Given the influence of both Western and Caribbean cultural, historical and narrative traditions on Martinique, the writers I have chosen are in a unique position to comment upon and critique the interaction between these aspects of Martinican life, and to explore the border position that the island occupies in relation to the French metropole, located both physically and politically on the periphery. An awareness of being situated in a liminal space pervades the work throughout the thesis, and I aim to analyze how the West and Caribbean and French and Creole interact and how the somewhat precarious location between them can be meaningfully conveyed in translation.

The chronology of the thesis is not linear according to the publication of the source language texts, but principally based around the translation theories used in each chapter. The purpose of this choice is to chart the development of different translation theories and strategies, which then allows us to draw conclusions relating to the efficacy of employing Western binary translation theories to study Caribbean texts. Therefore, in Chapter 2, we follow the exploration and the rejection of the use of binary translation strategies in relation to Fanon's key works *Peau noire, masques blancs* and *Les Damnés de la terre*, and begin to examine the possibility of using a framework based on Glissant's theory of relation, which emphasizes the interconnectivity of all languages,

people, places, cultures and things. This theory is then expanded upon and analysed in use with a selection of Chamoiseau's key fictional texts in Chapter 3. Chamoiseau's fiction was chosen as the case study in this chapter because of the close theoretical links between his work and that of Glissant, and the nature of the structure of his novels that recalls the rhizomatic relation between communities and languages that Glissant also studies.

Chapter 4, however, moves toward a more metaphorical appreciation of the term 'translation', thus explaining its position at once part of, and also at one step removed from the main body of the thesis. The subject matter of the chapter, Mayotte Capécia, is inextricably linked with that of Chapter 2, Frantz Fanon, and her inclusion in this thesis, in a chapter that focuses on the position of Caribbean women in a postcolonial French context, and more particularly, on the translation of the portrayal of the Self within distinct social habitus, is important in attempting to help reposition the gaze of the postcolonial scholar by bringing Capécia into mainstream focus in her own right, rather than in a continual conversation about how she has been portrayed by Fanon.

The choice of the genres in this thesis was predicated on the need to present a wide range in order firstly, to examine how Western translators respond to Caribbean literature from varying sources and secondly, to explore how literature can be manipulated for material gain (maximizing a readership through translational or editorial influence or choices); Fanon's philosophical/psychological work, Chamoiseau's fiction in which play with words and literary structure occupy a central position, and Capécia's semi-

autobiographical, plagiarized, edited novelettes. The choice of genres makes clear the difference in the use of French by each writer, and the challenges that this may present for each translator.

In the rest of Chapter 1, I shall begin by exploring the historical context of colonial expansion in Martinique to demonstrate the inextricable links between power, language and identity. Whilst, of course, these areas have been extensively written about before, it is necessary to briefly highlight here the main historical events and key methodological aspects that will frame the debate in this thesis. I then seek to examine the development of both Translation Studies and Postcolonial Studies and to consider how in the overlap between the two disciplines we can begin to map a translation practice that responds to the alterity at the heart of postcolonial French Caribbean texts, rather than reverting to a model which relies on strategies which encourage an assimilation with Anglophone socio-cultural and linguistic frameworks.

Chapter 2 explores the cultural importance of translation choices through a study of Frantz Fanon's *Peau noire, masques blancs* (1952), its translations by Charles Lam Markmann (1967) and Richard Philcox (2008), and *Les Damnés de la terre* (1961), and its translations by Constance Farrington (1963) and Richard Philcox (2004). Fanon's work is of particular interest in the context of this thesis, being the only body of non-fiction written entirely in standard French and employing philosophical and psychological terminology. His work appropriates both the French language and scholarly traditions to principally interrogate the position of the Martinican and Algerian Other in the face of colonial oppression, and places



Fanon himself in the centre of the developing psychological discourse on how to treat victims of colonialism and civil war.

The first translations of both texts, particularly Markmann's *Black Skin, White Masks*, brought Fanon's work to a much larger Anglophone, specifically American, audience at a time when it spoke directly to the aims and ideals of the Black Civil Rights Movement. The foregrounding of certain cultural and political themes through Markmann and Farrington's linguistic choices helped Fanon become a figurehead for this movement but did not accurately represent his philosophical and political thought. Philcox's later translations were written, in part, to redress the balance and situate the works in a more scholarly and philosophical context. I begin Chapter 2 by comparing Lawrence Venuti and Gideon Toury's translation methodologies, which put forward 'domestication' versus 'foreignization' and 'adequate' versus 'acceptable' dualisms to analyze the texts, and question these dualisms' potential to elucidate the translators' choices and the dialogue (if any) they promote between source and target language text. The chapter seeks to determine the efficacy of imposing such dualisms on translations, the effect that these translation techniques may have upon the target language reader, and if there may be a more productive way in which to approach these texts.

Chapter 3 studies three of Patrick Chamoiseau's seminal novels and their translations, *Chronique des sept misères* (1986), *Chronicle of the Seven Sorrows* translated by Linda Coverdale (1999), *Solibo magnifique* (1988), *Solibo Magnificent* translated by Rose-Myriam Réjouis and Val Vinokurov (1999) and

*Texaco* (1992), translated under the same title by Réjouis and Vinokurov (1998). Key themes in all three novels include the characters' search for identity and a meaningful connection to their past, their relationship between the Self and Other (indeed, this particular theme connects all three writers' work), cultural and linguistic liminality and the linguistic interplay between French and Creole. The chapter also examines how these novels fit into Chamoiseau's theory of *créolité* that he put forward in 1989 with Jean Bernabé and Raphaël Confiant. The methodological framework for this chapter teases out the connections between Chamoiseau and Édouard Glissant's theoretical developments (chiefly drawing upon *créolité* and the theory of relation put forward by Glissant) and expands upon them by attempting to conceptualize a translation theory based on Glissant's theory of relation and assessing it by applying it to textual analyses of the three translations. It also puts forward the suggestion that translation could be viewed ethnographically, which is further developed in Chapter 4.

Chapter 4 focuses on Mayotte Capécia's novelette *Je suis Martiniquaise* (1948) and the 1997 translations by Beatrice Stith Clark, and takes a less literal approach to translation than is undertaken in Chapters 2 and 3. The chapter examines the complex relationship between Capécia and Fanon, and his influence upon how she has been read, which I argue is in itself a type of translation. Whilst a brief analysis of some key translation choices is completed, it is with the aim of highlighting Western translation stereotypes that still pervade the discipline. The chapter aims to put forward a metaphorical concept of translation in terms of a self-reassessment and self-rewriting within the framework of both personal identity and written literature. Given the influence

that culture has upon not only the development of language and the concept of the Self (and, indeed, vice versa) it is important to consider translation in a much less literal manner. Whilst Fanon and Chamoiseau appropriate the French language for their literary projects, this chapter explores the possibility of viewing Capécia's attempts to take back agency for her own body and life by removing herself from a subjugated working-class environment in Martinique. The chapter seeks to demonstrate the autobiographical influences upon Capécia's writing and how this informed how she chose to present herself to the readership through (semi-) autobiographical or auto-ethnographic texts, which could be described as a form of auto-translation, which runs through her life and work.

Approaching translation in terms of a broader application of the term recalls the intersection between translation and creative writing, and indeed, creative re-writing. In this case, an examination the (auto-) translation that occurs in this text, alongside the fact that the draft of *Je suis Martiniquaise* was effectively re-written by a team of copy editors at Corrêa allows us to probe the various processes and meanings that 'translation' can encompass and the extent to which the creative license of editors may be appropriate.

This thesis aims to investigate the intersections between culture and language to ascertain how they affect the development of postcolonial identity, and how, in turn, these same concepts of culture and language affect how the identity is portrayed in English translation. Whilst it relies heavily on linguistic analyses of the texts, it is chiefly a cultural study, examining the effect that language has on human relations and our perceptions of the Other. As Gentzler notes, 'we, as

humans, are the subjects of a variety of discourses but are also free to change those relations that condition our existence.’<sup>16</sup> It is hoped that the work in this thesis will help advance a change in the relations that condition our existence as translators, and translation scholars, moving towards a practical understanding of translation that encourages an intercultural appreciation of the work under examination.

### **Historical Context - From Colonization to Departmentalization**

In order to fully understand the relationship of the Martinican writers under examination in this thesis, and indeed, of all Martinicans, to France, it is necessary to provide here some historical context for the corpus texts. I shall do so by briefly sketching out the driving force behind colonization, that is, the development of the sugar industry and trade, and the principle effects this had upon the island, on language use and identity creation, which, although they write in very different circumstances and places, are amongst the key concerns of Fanon, Chamoiseau and Capécia.

France’s involvement with Martinique has been both long-standing and complex, and began when France colonized the island in 1635, following the ‘discovery’ of the Caribbean by Christopher Columbus in 1492 and Martinique in 1502. This was during a period of intense European expansionist activity, when the size of empires abroad was linked to, and representative of, the country’s military, economic and domestic power. Indeed, Robinson notes the social and economic

---

<sup>16</sup> Gentzler, *Contemporary Translation Theories*, p. 200.

dichotomies at play in much of imperial expansion, that although social and economic improvement of colonies was very occasionally possible, the overarching experience of colonialism and Western demand for power overseas for the colonized was oppressive in the extreme.

Empire-building has traditionally been justified on the grounds of economic gain (the conquered lands will enrich the imperial power), strategy and security (the conquered lands will serve as buffer zones between the imperial power and its enemies), moral obligations (tyrannized peoples must be liberated from their oppressors and protected from them), and Social Darwinism (stronger cultures will naturally rule over weaker ones). At worst, empires destroy peoples and cultures; at best, they bring about a fruitful mixing and mingling of cultures that gives new lifeblood to isolated communities.<sup>17</sup>

Martinique, along with the other French Caribbean colonies at the time, Guadeloupe, Saint Domingue (later becoming Haiti after gaining its independence from France in 1804) and French Guiana, soon became crucial for the French in terms of the development of sugar plantations and mills. The almost complete annihilation of Martinique's native Carib population, often due to disease imported by foreign sailors, coupled with the rapid development of the sugar industry emphasized to the French the need to search for suitable slaves elsewhere. Joseph Fradera notes the vast upsurge in the number of slaves put to work in Martinique, hinting at the wealth this now would bring the French plantation owners, whilst pointing out the human cost of such expansionist activities because over the course of just thirty years '[b]etween 1670 and 1700, the number of enslaved Africans in Martinique expanded from 7 000 to 15 000, while Saint-Christophe [St. Kitts] possessed about 12 000 at the end of that

---

<sup>17</sup> Robinson, *Translation and Empire*, pp. 8-9. Ironically, 'Social Darwinism' existed as a concept before 'Darwinism', as during the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries a belief in a racist hierarchical notion of humankind, with white Europeans at the top, and black African slaves amongst those at the bottom, was widespread.

period.’<sup>18</sup> Indeed, it must also be remembered that the financial attractiveness of African slaves also heavily figured in the decision to import from this country, as,

[...] European indentured servants and convicts did not suffice to maintain the burgeoning plantation economy. The origin of black slavery [...] lies in the great economic advantages that the inexpensive supply of robust African slaves presented for white plantation owners.<sup>19</sup>

Following the declaration of the legitimacy of enslaving Africans for use in the colonies, their use in maintaining production in the sugar plantations became commonplace and set a precedent for the effective kidnap and appalling treatment of African slaves during that time across the Caribbean. France was never quite able to reconcile her contradictory desire to be seen as both a liberal country, and her need to maintain her status as a major imperial power.

In fact, France would often seek to have it both ways, by asserting that enslavement saved (freed) the *soul* of the slave: that is what Labat’s tale of Louis XIII manages to convey in a few words. Throughout colonial and postcolonial history, France will often be torn between its magnanimous, liberal impulses (religious at first, then humanitarian) and its desire to dominate and profit.<sup>20</sup>

Despite any humanitarian misgivings voiced, over the course of two hundred years until the definitive abolition of slavery by the French government in 1848, it is thought that the French Windward Islands alone ‘imported more than 300,000 slaves between the early 17<sup>th</sup> century and the ending of the trade in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century.’<sup>21</sup>

---

<sup>18</sup> Joseph M. Fradera, ‘The Caribbean between Empires’ in *The Caribbean – A History of the Region and its Peoples*, ed. by Stefan Palmié and Francisco A. Scarano (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 2011), (pp. 165-176), p. 172.

<sup>19</sup> Catherine A. Reinhardt, *Claims to Memory: Beyond Slavery and Emancipation in the French Caribbean* (New York and Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2008), p. 36.

<sup>20</sup> Christopher L. Miller, *The French Atlantic Triangle – Literature and Culture of the Slave Trade* (Durham & London: Duke University Press, 2008), p. 20 (emphasis in original).

<sup>21</sup> Palmié and Scarano, p. 8.

Fradera goes on to explain the agricultural crisis provoked by the change in planting because

sugar was the unquestioned engine of this social transformation. The financial and organizational demands of the industry gave rise to a planter class that was very different from the growers of the prior century, who had combined food production with cash cropping. The success of the sugar plantations, with their spectacular increase in disposable income, would plunge the Caribbean into a chronic dependency on food imports.<sup>22</sup>

It is interesting to note the echoes through time that exist, because even now as Martinique enjoys the status of a French *département*, dependency on the ‘*mère patrie*’ for food and other commodities still persists, underscoring the position of power that France still maintains in relation to its Caribbean DOM by introducing metropolitan foodstuffs and supermarket chains. This economic dependency on France has wider implications and is examined by Glissant who sees Martinique’s use of French as their main language (a language which he describes as, ‘*une langue de consommation*’<sup>23</sup>) as symbolic of the development of the passive consumerism of foreign goods. He argues this is detrimental to all aspects of Martinican social and economic life, including the production of literature. He sees this as a historical problem and notes that if a country does not succeed in securing economic independence, an independent identity reflecting the culture of the country (often achieved through literary production) therefore will be impossible to create.

L’agrégation des bourgs a fait naître et vu se développer des métiers de base (tanneurs, cordonniers, couturières, ébénistes, menuisiers, etc.), mais qui peu à peu disparaîtront pour laisser place au seul trafic d’importation. Les professions libérales et de prestige seront massivement investies entre 1946 et 1960 et connaîtront bientôt la saturation. Pendant cette longue période, où d’abord les bourgs se juxtaposent à la Plantation (1850 – 1940) et où ensuite ils cesseront imperceptiblement de tenir leur rôle de foyers d’artisanat [...], les textes littéraires produits le sont dans le champ de l’écrit et par le

---

<sup>22</sup> Joseph M. Fradera, ‘The Caribbean between Empires’, *The Caribbean*, ed. by Palmié and Scarano, p. 172.

<sup>23</sup> Édouard Glissant, *Le Discours antillais* (Paris: Gallimard, 1997), p. 618 (emphasis in original).

biais de cette couche moyenne. L'oralité de la littérature traditionnelle est refoulée par la vague de l'écriture, *qui n'en prend pas le relais*.<sup>24</sup>

As the number of slaves and the threat of rebellion rapidly grew in the colonies, Louis XIV ordered that the *Code Noir* be introduced in 1685. It stipulated the following: that all slaves must be baptized into the Roman Catholic faith, regardless of any other faith they had, that no marriages between slaves were to take place without the master's express permission, that no slaves from different plantations may gather together in the street or at each other's plantations and that it was the master's right to chain and beat a slave when he felt the slave deserved it. These rules were brought in ostensibly to ensure the appropriate treatment of slaves but effectively reduced the slaves to property of their master, with whom he could do as he wished. As Haigh explains,

The threat of appalling punishment, even for the most minor misdeeds, the promise of the rewards of the afterlife through conversion to Catholicism and even the seeds of the infamous colonial policy of assimilation [...] were enshrined in the *Code Noir* as ways of ensuring the lasting subjugation of the growing slave population.<sup>25</sup>

The French policy of assimilation began in 1848,<sup>26</sup> and was a process whereby the government hoped to fully integrate Martinican citizens into a 'French' way of life, mainly by cultural and educational means. The introduction of the policy was problematized due to the fact that a slavery of sorts was still operating on the island, demonstrating the French's continuing attempts to create and maintain a

---

<sup>24</sup> Ibid. p. 812 (emphasis in original).

<sup>25</sup> Sam Haigh, 'Introduction' in *An Introduction to Caribbean Francophone Writing: Guadeloupe and Martinique*, ed. by Sam Haigh (Oxford and New York: Berg, 1999), p. 2.

<sup>26</sup> See Myriam Cottias, 'Esclavage, assimilation et dépendance: Essai sur une relation coloniale', *Les Cahiers du Centre de Recherches Historiques*, 40 (2007), 143-161. The verb 's'assimiler' had already existed for some time, with its first appearance in 1828 in F. Guizot's text *Civilisation-Europe* (who was himself a key figure in the history of French education and its homogenization) with reference to foreign countries as, 'l'esprit de corps faisait ensuite un grand travail pour s'assimiler ces éléments étrangers'. The term appeared again in 1864, in a more specific reference to colonialism, with 's'assimiler à' meaning, 's'intégrer à, se fondre dans (un peuple, un pays)'. See <http://www.cnrtl.fr/etymologie/assimiler> for a more detailed examination of the term (accessed 16.12.15).



hierarchical system of the people living under their rule and their attempts to maintain a slave population following abolition, due to the difficulty of finding suitable replacement workers to tend the plantations.<sup>27</sup> Indeed, 'l'abolition reconduit une inégalité et organise une transition de l'esclavage à la servitude. C'est en partie ce qui honte le débat sur l'esclavage aujourd'hui.'<sup>28</sup>

Following the introduction of the French assimilation project which insisted upon the use of French for educational and legal purposes, it became clear that the aim of bringing France and her colonies closer together meant in reality that France was systemizing the processes and manner in which the colony was to be shaped into a place that could be considered appropriately 'French'. When the French first arrived in Martinique, the process of re-naming landmarks and places on the island, and indeed, the island itself, was a geographical manifestation of the silencing of the native population and the assertion of colonial power. Introducing the assimilation policy enabled the French to reinforce the importance of names and naming as a means of using language to hierarchize cultures and people, and to emphasize the continuing colonial dominance.<sup>29</sup> Bernabé, Chamoiseau and Confiant succinctly describe the process

---

<sup>27</sup> The development and instigation of the assimilation policy also proved problematic in terms of coming to a broad agreement across all political bodies as to what assimilation would precisely entail. Martin Deming Lewis comments that, 'at the height of the debate over assimilation as a colonial policy, a delegate to the *Congrès Colonial National* of 1889-90 complained that, "among the partisans of assimilation there are not two who agree on the meaning of that expression"' (p. 132). As Lewis explains, the differing priorities of civil servants in metropolitan France and her colonies, alongside those of the elected deputies in the colonies meant that a proper consensus as to what should happen was never reached, despite the publication of Arthur Girault's *Principes de Colonisation et de Législation Coloniale* in 1895. See for further information Martin Deming Lewis, 'One Hundred Million Frenchmen: The "Assimilation" Theory in French Colonial Policy' *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 4.2 (1962) 129-153.

<sup>28</sup> Françoise Vergès, 'Les troubles de la mémoire: Traite négrière, esclavage et écriture de l'histoire (Memory Troubles: Slave Trade, Slavery and History Writing)', *Cahiers d'Études Africaines*, 45.179/180 (2005), 1143-1178 (p. 1147).

<sup>29</sup> For an exploration of the importance, and danger, of names and naming (albeit in a different colonial context) see Brian Friel, *Translations* (London and Boston: Faber and Faber, 1981).

as follows, ‘l’assimilation, à travers ses pompes et ses œuvres d’Europe, s’acharnait à peindre notre vécu aux couleurs de l’Ailleurs’<sup>30</sup> whilst naming and the process of naming also plays a crucial role in both *Chronique des sept misères* and *Texaco*.

Therefore, from the instigation of the assimilation policy, the widespread use of Creole amongst slaves and Martinicans alike was perceived as a linguistic threat to the development of French hegemony on the island. Creole occupies a unique, and somewhat ironic, position in Martinique, as it developed as a tool used to communicate between plantation or habitation owner and slave, a process made problematic by the fact that the slaves often spoke different African languages and the master spoke French, later becoming a symbol for the oppression of slaves.

Mais pour le colon comme pour l’esclave, et, plus tard, pour le Béké comme pour le fils d’esclaves, la culture créole ne sera pas une culture, ce sera tout au plus un outil d’agriculture, un savoir-faire d’habitation pour l’habitation. Quant à la langue créole, elle ne sera pas une langue, mais un jargon d’habitation pour l’habitation. Et pour les uns comme pour les autres le tout sera frappé du vieux crachat esclavagiste, donc méprisable au plus haut point.<sup>31</sup>

Today, the fact that French remains the official language of Martinique has, according to Bernabé, Chamoiseau and Confiant, entailed ‘une amputation culturelle’ from the Creole language and culture, and the symbolic values it represents. They emphasize the physicality and the performative act of speaking

---

This play follows the interactions between the Irish-speaking pupils of a hedge school in Donegal in 1833 and the English soldiers sent to translate place names and produce an English language map of the country. It explores the problems that occur through misunderstanding and mistranslation (both literally and metaphorically), the cultural importance of names and the importance of geographical rootedness in a place in the construction of identity.

<sup>30</sup> Jean Bernabé, Patrick Chamoiseau, Raphaël Confiant, *Éloge de la créolité/In Praise of Creoleness*, trans. by M.B Taleb-Khyar, édition bilingue (Paris: Gallimard, 1993), p. 18.

<sup>31</sup> Patrick Chamoiseau and Raphaël Confiant, *Lettres créoles – Tracées antillaises et continentales de la littérature. Haïti, Guadeloupe, Martinique, Guyane (1635 – 1975)* (Paris: Gallimard, 1999), pp. 49-50.

a language (referring to ‘une amputation culturelle’ and ‘[refouler] le créole dans la gorge’) and the negative effects any repression of that language provokes.

Chaque fois qu’une mère, croyant favoriser l’acquisition de la langue française, a refoulé le créole dans la gorge d’un enfant, cela n’a été en fait qu’un coup porté à l’imagination de ce dernier, qu’un envoi en déportation de sa créativité.<sup>32</sup>

As a result, suppression of the Creole language and culture as part of the policy was of utmost importance, as it emphasized the control over the slave, and to an extent, the growing local mulatto population, demonstrating their position of Other in the face of French imperialism. Bandia makes clear the extent of the French imperial ‘vision’ noting that,

the settlement colonies built on slavery and the exploitation colonies peopled by native-others were absent or marginalized in the collective French psyche. The colonial metropole was the root, the centre, the fountain of civilization that would irrigate the culturally barren hinterlands of the empire.<sup>33</sup>

Furthermore, the suppression of a language created as a means of self-expression and freedom which subverted the rule of the colonizer underscored the fact that the colonizer had dominion not only over what happens in the present and future, putting the colonized in a position of otherness to themselves, but also over what could legitimately be said about the past. It meant that Martinican culture and history, such as it was, was effectively erased to make way for the Western, ‘authorized’ French History which was, as Dominique Chancé argues,

[...] aliénante parce qu’elle englobe l’Histoire des Antilles dans l’Histoire de la Conquête et de la colonisation parce qu’elle en fait les épisodes spécifiquement antillais, à savoir ceux qui contestent la domination française ou blanche, parce qu’elle donne son point de vue et ordonne les faits selon sa propre logique.<sup>34</sup>

---

<sup>32</sup> Bernabé, Chamoiseau and Confiant, *Éloge de la créolité*, p. 43.

<sup>33</sup> Bandia, ‘Introduction’ in *Writing and Translating Francophone Discourse*, p. 5.

<sup>34</sup> Dominique Chancé, *L’Auteur en souffrance – Essai sur la position et la représentation de l’auteur dans le roman antillais contemporain, 1981 - 1992* (Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 2000), p. 10.

Including the Antilles within a historical framework endorsed by the Western, colonial world brought into sharp focus the French success at effectively silencing the indigenous population and refusing their identity, in terms of race, social position and culture.<sup>35</sup> This was achieved through the fact that history was preserved in written French. This physical manifestation of power emphasized the dominance that France held over its colonial subjects and their own methods of transmitting their history through oral storytelling, because of the fact that Creole functioned primarily as a spoken language. History, and the Martinicans' (and, indeed, other colonial subjects') agency in that History were taken from them, effectively rendering them without a legitimized historical past and, consequently, without a clear sense of identity.

L'Histoire ne pourrait être objet d'un récit linéaire, chronologique, parce que les Antilles ne sont les sujets d'aucune Histoire. Les écrivains se demandent, en quelque sorte, comment dire l'Histoire d'un sujet quand ce sujet historique n'existe pas encore, assujéti qu'il est dans la relation esclavagiste puis coloniale et néocoloniale, et donc pris dans l'Histoire de l'Autre.<sup>36</sup>

The situation of French dominance in the portrayal of Martinican history persisted until decolonization in 1946. However, this date, signalling the official end to the positions of colonized and colonizer, is itself complicated by the fact that Martinique's status immediately became that of one of France's DOMs, meaning that although technically classed as French citizens with full access to the rights of metropolitan French citizens, France itself did not recognize at the time the effects of the country's colonial past upon the national psyche.<sup>3738</sup>

---

<sup>35</sup> See the introduction of *The Francophone Caribbean Today: Literature, Language and Culture* ed. by Gertrud Aub-Buscher and Beverley Omerod Noakes (Barbados, Jamaica, Trinidad & Tobago: University of West Indies Press, 2003) for an overview of contemporary literature from Guadeloupe, French Guyana and Martinique and the influence of both social and theoretical movements such as *négritude* upon them.

<sup>36</sup> Dominique Chancé, *L'Auteur en souffrance*, p. 21.

<sup>37</sup> Despite passing a decree in 1983 declaring 22<sup>nd</sup> May as a day of commemoration of slavery, and a law in 2001 stating that France's participation in the transatlantic slave trade amounted to a

Moreover, as Mireille Rosello notes, Martinique still does not enjoy many economic benefits from being connected to France,

the island suffers from a non-diversified and declining production of sugar-cane, banana and rum. Commerce is still strictly regulated by agreements between the island and the metropole and the fact that the DOMs belong to the European Economic Community only complicates matters in reality.<sup>39</sup>

By refusing to acknowledge these difficulties, three major events are also negated: the recognition of the years of suffering as slaves, France's involvement in the international slave trade, and above all, the identity the ex-slaves created for themselves from the memory of slavery and in relation to the actions of France. Reinhardt comments that although in 1998 the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the French abolition of slavery was commemorated, the ability (and willingness, on the part of the French) to meaningfully do so was lacking due to an ongoing project of enforced 'forgetting',

through organized forgetting, big powers deprive small countries of their national consciousness. As people lose awareness of the past, they gradually lose themselves as a nation. After one hundred fifty years of controlled forgetting during which the former slaves were reprogrammed to see France as a generous, liberating mother, recollecting the past is a formidable challenge.<sup>40</sup>

---

crime against humanity, in 2005 Sarkozy (then Interior Minister) supported a motion to encourage schools to teach the positive aspects of French colonialism. Aimé Césaire refused to meet Sarkozy and an upcoming visit to Martinique was consequently cancelled. This inconsistent approach to the memorialization of the slave trade and use of slaves in a French colony, although improving in more recent times, demonstrates the distance still left to travel in France's willingness to take responsibility for colonialism and to appropriately commemorate the lives of those who were exploited and died for colonial gain.

<sup>38</sup> See Wilder, *Freedom Time* for a detailed examination of the socio-historical framework for the development and implementation of decolonization in Martinique, partly based on the fact that, 'abolition had freed a black population not only *from* slavery but *for* new regimes of colonial domination from which they would then struggle to be emancipated' (p. 17, emphasis in original). Wilder also explores Césaire's refusal to see decolonization as merely equating to self-governance, but as a way of rethinking the entire Antillean relationship to France. He explains that, 'Césaire's critical strategy regarding language, culture, *and* politics is condensed in his will to "inflect" rather than reject; to bend, refigure, and refunction, France was inseparable from his ambition to expand, explode, and elevate France. He, like Senghor, developed a political poetics and poetic politics that turned France into an uncanny object, simultaneously familiar and fearful' (p. 34, emphasis in original).

<sup>39</sup> Mireille Rosello, 'Aimé Césaire and the Notebook of a Return to My Native Land in the 1990s' in Aimé Césaire, *Cahier d'un retour au pays natal/Notebook of a Return to My Native Land*, translated by Mireille Rosello with Annie Pritchard (Newcastle: Bloodaxe Books, 1995), p. 19.

<sup>40</sup> Reinhardt, *Claims to Memory*, p. 8.

A challenge now lies in the ability to strike a balance between the recollection and recognition of the past and the creation of a post-slavery, post-colonial identity, which is informed – but not overwhelmed – by Martinique’s collective past, and it is this that both Patrick Chamoiseau and Édouard Glissant seek to address in their theory and prose fiction.

It is unsurprising therefore that Martinicans sought to create an identity of their own rather than relying on that which the French attempted to impose upon them, which was not in any way relevant to life in the Caribbean. Furthermore, it is unsurprising that, instead of looking to France or French customs in the quest for identity, the slaves and ex-slaves looked across the Caribbean and towards Africa. This demonstrates that whilst the geography of a physical place plays an important role in the process of identity building, it is the symbolic nature of the homeland that can be most significant in the development of an accurate sense of self. In the case of Negritude, which developed the notion of Africa as being the locus of Caribbean identity, the move towards African culture as a framework for identity creation also demonstrates a desire to reject the Western construct of Self and Other, an entirely subjective notion under which the Caribbean inhabitants had lived for so long. In *Peau noire, masques blancs* Fanon articulates the struggle to escape this Western dualism rooted in race and to construct an identity removed from a Western conception of selfhood,

Ici, [...], nous assistons aux efforts désespérés d’un nègre qui s’acharne à découvrir le sens de l’identité noire. La civilisation blanche, la culture européenne ont imposé au Noir une déviation existentielle. Nous montrerons ailleurs que souvent ce qu’on appelle l’âme noire est une construction du Blanc.<sup>41</sup>

---

<sup>41</sup> Frantz Fanon, *Peau noire, masques blancs* (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1952), p.11.

In this text, Fanon refers primarily to the Antillean, and specifically Martinican, experience of colonialism, yet his comments can be extrapolated to refer to the effect of the colonizer's gaze on the entire Francophone African and Caribbean diaspora. As noted by Keith and Pile in *Place and the Politics of Identity*, 'the diaspora invokes an imagined geography, a spatiality that draws on connections across oceans and continents and yet unifies the Black experience inside a shared territory.'<sup>42</sup>

From 1635 until the twentieth century, literature written about the Caribbean tended to be written and published by Europeans, such as missionaries and settlers.<sup>43</sup> Looking at the European perspective on colonialism and literary creativity, Christopher Miller states that for a wide range of French metropolitan authors writing about the colonies during the time of the slave trade their focus was surprisingly varied.

[...] French literature, understood here in the largest sense of the term, manifested every possible attitude toward a problem [the slave trade] that was increasingly difficult to ignore: from blithe ignorance (Rousseau), through ironic, somewhat hypocritical critique (Voltaire), to outright protest (Olympe de Gouges). Literature was one of the most important battlegrounds for the debate on slavery, race, and trade. For lack of authentic slave narratives in French (there were none), writers made them up. To read the broader *littérature négrière* now – some of it well known, some obscure – is, to a large extent, to marvel at the ability of France to keep the problem of slavery out of sight and out of mind.<sup>44</sup>

However, as Miller alludes above, authentic literature written by those who had experienced life in the colonies, specifically as a black person, were scarce. Indeed, the chronology provided by Chamoiseau and Confiant in *Lettres créoles*

---

<sup>42</sup> *Place and the Politics of Identity*, ed. by Michael Keith and Steve Pile (London and New York: Routledge, 1993), pp. 17–18.

<sup>43</sup> See Chamoiseau and Confiant, *Lettres créoles* for a further exploration of these texts. Xavier Eyma's *Les Peaux noires: Scènes de la vie des esclaves* (Paris: L'Harmattan, 2012) is a good example of a text about the Black slave population of Martinique written from the perspective of a white settler, claiming to produce a text of objective ethnographic worth.

<sup>44</sup> Miller, *The French Atlantic Triangle*, p. x (emphasis in original).

confirms an evolution in the relationship between literature written in French and the Caribbean (such as the writing of Père Labat and du Tertre, who focused on a more ethnographic examination of the Caribbean), then shifting from being cast as the subject of French literature (which Chamoiseau and Confiant describe as, ‘[...] ne témoigne que d’une aventure solitaire et hautaine’<sup>45</sup>), to writing it themselves (such as René Ménil, and, indeed, Glissant, Chamoiseau, Confiant and Césaire).<sup>46</sup> Echoing the links made by Glissant between materialism and cultural production, Miller points out the importance of economic and cultural capital for colonizer and slave alike, the similarities between literature and money, and the driving forces behind the French and their African slaves’ perceived need to develop both in the Caribbean.

They are both figures of desire – as a force for transformation and transmigration, desire to have something (or something more) or to be somewhere else. The slave trade combined these two: traders had to go somewhere (or send others, their agents) in order to (they hoped) get rich. Capitalist greed, romantic longing, and exoticist aesthetics all reflect a quest and a desire. For the slave traders the object was money; for the Africans they brought to the New World the object was their lost native land and the thirst for return, often expressed in literature.<sup>47</sup>

As previously discussed, Glissant ascribes a paucity of Martinican literature to the country’s position of passive consumerism which he believes contributes to a state of creative paralysis. He points out that the current literary trends in Martinique reflect a (perhaps misguided) desire to return to that which Martinicans consider to be an authentic expression of their national identity, ‘aujourd’hui encore, la couche moyenne de la population martiniquaise affectera de considérer les œuvres actuelles du folklore (ce qui est “simple, direct”) comme les seules “vraies” manifestations de “notre culture”.’<sup>48</sup> However, as we

---

<sup>45</sup> Chamoiseau and Confiant, *Lettres créoles*, p 33.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid. pp. 277 – 284.

<sup>47</sup> Miller, *The French Atlantic Triangle*, p. 10.

<sup>48</sup> Glissant, *Le Discours antillais*, pp. 311-312.



can see from this thesis corpus, Martinican literary production is now moving beyond folklorism into an era in which past cultural movements (such as Negritude, celebrated by the likes of the Césaires and René Ménil in *Tropiques*) can be critically reappraised and used to inform the creation of a new Martinican literary identity.

This problematic relationship that existed, and arguably exists, between France and Martinique both pre- and post-departmentalization, and indeed, in the gap in the Caribbean literary market, therefore provoked a desire amongst Martinican writers and cultural critics to reclaim what they felt was their own cultural identity from the assimilationist framework still implicit in the dominance of the French language as a means of communication and education on the island. Paul Bandia writes of the stifling emphasis on French culture in Martinican schoolchildren's lessons and hints at the possible stymying of Creole artistic and literary production in the future as a result of this.

Coupled with a policy of assimilation and centralization, an expansionist desire for an imperial France – which had school children in the colonies chanting ‘nos ancêtres les Gaulois’ (‘our ancestors the Gauls’) – the notion of a France d’outre-mer had serious implications for the manner in which the French language and culture were to be adopted and used in the colonies. The desire to turn peoples in distant lands and cultures into upright French citizens had serious ramifications for artistic and aesthetic productions in the colonies and for their ultimate acceptance and integration within the realm of French cultural heritage.<sup>49</sup>

Aimé Césaire was one among a small number of Martinican artists, who, during the early part of the twentieth century, decided that it was necessary to take back control of the way the Caribbean and its people were portrayed in literature. Alongside Césaire, his wife Suzanne and fellow Martinican and recipient of the

---

<sup>49</sup> Bandia, ‘Introduction’ in *Writing and Translating Francophone Discourse*, pp. 4-5.

Prix Goncourt, René Maran, were key figures in the development of Negritude and the journal, *Tropiques*, through which they could disseminate their work.

Rosello emphasizes the importance of their work, writing that, 'Césaire's generation set about redefining the goals and standards of a literature written by Black writers about Black people'.<sup>50</sup> Césaire began formulating the terms of Negritude with L.S. Senghor during his time studying in Paris, and the word first appeared in print in his seminal *Cahier d'un retour au pays natal* published in 1939. Although the two students founded Negritude together, their definitions of the term, although consistent in terms of rejecting racism and an atomization of society, did vary, which perhaps contributed in part to the sometimes mistaken appropriation of the term by others.

Pour Senghor, plus théoricien, la 'négritude est, tout simplement, l'ensemble des valeurs du monde noir. Il n'est pas racisme, il est culture: il est situation comprise et dominée pour appréhender le cosmos en s'accordant à lui', tandis que Césaire voit en elle 'la conscience d'être noir, ce qui implique la prise en charge de son destin, de son histoire et de sa culture. La négritude est la simple reconnaissance de fait et ne comporte ni racisme, ni reniement de l'Europe, ni exclusivité, mais au contraire une fraternité avec tous les hommes'.<sup>51</sup>

In a later text, *Discours sur la Négritude* (1987), Césaire describes Negritude as a manifestation of a person's innate being, coupled with the influence of their lived experience and, for him, its purpose was as follows,

L'essentiel est qu'avec elle [la Négritude] était commencée une entreprise de réhabilitation de nos valeurs par nous-mêmes, d'approfondissements de notre passé par nous-mêmes, du ré-enracinement de nous-mêmes dans une histoire, dans une géographie et dans une culture, le tout se traduisant non pas par un passéisme, archaïsant, mais par une réactivation du passé en vue de son propre dépassement.<sup>52</sup>

---

<sup>50</sup> Mireille Rosello, 'Aimé Césaire and the Notebook of a Return to My Native Land in the 1990s' in *Cahier d'un retour au pays natal/Notebook of a Return to My Native Land*, pp. 17-18.

<sup>51</sup> Georges Ngal, "Lire..." *Le Discours sur le Colonialisme d'Aimé Césaire* (Paris: Présence Africaine, 1994), p. 14.

<sup>52</sup> Aimé Césaire, *Discours sur le colonialisme, suivi par Discours sur la négritude* (Paris: Éditions Présence Africaine, 2011), pp. 85-86.

The notion that Black people could reclaim an African identity through memory, culture and art, ultimately return to their authentic being and reject that which was provided by the Western colonizer was revolutionary, and one which was echoed in Sartre's use of 'dépassement' in 'Orphée noir' with reference to Césaire's poetic work. Sartre notes, 'un poème de Césaire, [...] éclate et tourne sur lui-même comme une fusée, des soleils en sortent qui tournent et explosent en nouveaux soleils, c'est un perpétuel dépassement'<sup>53</sup> which emphasizes the fact that Césaire's work constantly seeks to clash with Western preconceived notions of 'white' and 'black', 'Self' and 'Other' so that although he foregrounds the crucial influence of African culture, it must also be overcome, so that a society removed from racial influences may emerge. Sartre continues,

ce que Césaire détruit, ce n'est pas *toute* culture, c'est la culture blanche; ce qu'il met au jour, ce n'est pas le désir de *tout*, ce sont les aspirations révolutionnaires du nègre opprimé; ce qu'il touche au fond de lui ce n'est pas l'esprit, c'est une certaine forme d'humanité concrète et déterminée.<sup>54</sup>

Négritude immediately gained support amongst Caribbean thinkers and writers who found in Césaire's work a way of reevaluating their relationship with both the West and Africa. However, criticism of the theory soon also emerged, and focused on the lack of engagement with the multiethnicism present in the Caribbean, or with women's perspective of the lived experience there. Rosello explains the purpose of emphasizing the links with Africa by noting that, 'at the time, the creation of a new mythic Africa may have been necessary to overcome or at least resist an undesirable craving for assimilation.'<sup>55</sup> Some have also

---

<sup>53</sup> Jean-Paul Sartre, 'Orphée noir' in Léopold Sédar Senghor, *Anthologie de la nouvelle poésie nègre et malgache de la langue française* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1969), pp.ix-xliv (p. xxvi).

<sup>54</sup> Ibid. p. xxvii (emphasis in original).

<sup>55</sup> Mireille Rosello, 'Aimé Césaire and the Notebook of a Return to My Native Land in the 1990s' in *Cahier d'un retour au pays natal/Notebook of a Return to My Native Land*, p. 22.

picked out the apparent contradiction of a poet who on the one hand advocates a break from the oppression of the Western white hegemony, whilst on the other, in his job as mayor of Fort-de-France and member of the National Assembly, campaigns for Martinique to remain part of France as a DOM.

It also soon became clear that although the notion of Africa as a homeland (and indeed, a spiritual homeland, too) put forward in Césaire's theory of Negritude could provide a unifying starting point for Martinican postcolonial identity creation, it was dangerous to view it as a reversion to a nostalgic longing for an unattainable place. Indeed, although Glissant and Chamoiseau were wary of promoting this unrealistic nostalgia in their own writing, they could both be considered 'sons of Césaire' in terms of their engagement with Negritude and the language, literature, culture and history of Martinique, and the Caribbean more widely, in the development of their own theories of Antillanité and Créolité. These theories not only seek to revalorize the notion of a Caribbean identity, but also acknowledge and emphasize Caribbean multiethnicism and interconnectivity with other languages and cultures across the Caribbean, and indeed, the world.

In *Éloge de la créolité* Bernabé, Chamoiseau and Confiant acknowledge their debt to Césaire and his work in bringing Africa and the Caribbean into dialogue with one another but criticize the fact that Negritude depended upon a relationship with a place outside the Caribbean to valorize Black identity. Although Negritude provided the springboard for their theoretical enquiry, for them, and Glissant too, it is necessary to look to the Caribbean itself to construct a meaningful identity.

En sorte que, même galvanisant nos énergies au coin de ferveurs inédites, la Négritude ne remédia nullement à notre trouble esthétique. Il se peut même qu'elle ait, quelque temps, aggravé notre instabilité identitaire, nous désignant du doigt le syndrome le plus pertinent de nos morbidités: le déport intérieur, le mimétisme, le naturel du tout-proche vaincu par la fascination du lointain, etc., toutes figures de l'aliénation. Thérapeutique violente et paradoxale, la Négritude fit, à celle d'Europe, succéder l'illusion africaine. [...] Incontournable moment dialectique. Indispensable cheminement. Terrible défi que celui d'en sortir pour enfin bâtir une nouvelle synthèse, elle-même provisoire, sur le parcours ouvert de l'Histoire, notre histoire.<sup>56</sup>

Creating a theory in which to ground their own history, language and identity is a critical step in reasserting the nationhood and selfhood of the inhabitants of a place that has for so long been defined and oppressed through the Other's gaze. For Glissant, as we have already mentioned, the absence of national economic self-determination, a collective project and the consequences of this result in fear about the future and their individual position.<sup>57</sup> Therefore, Glissant and other Martinican writers, and particularly those who have identified themselves with the Creole language and cultural background, have often emphasized the importance of writing in order to access their history, and in so doing, re-establishing a collective identity.

L'histoire est à faire, avant d'être à raconter. Les Antilles doivent construire leur 'nous', leur parole collective afin d'accéder à la symbolisation de leur histoire. Il leur faut trouver une position historique pour faire face aux deux inconnus dans lesquels ils sont pris: l'inconnaissable du passé de la traite, l'inconnu d'un avenir non assujetti.<sup>58</sup>

The language spoken, or written, by Martinicans has long since been an indication of social class, with children being discouraged from speaking Creole in favour of French, considered to be more 'acceptable'. The assimilationist practice of favouring French over Creole language use is discussed by a wide range of Caribbean writers (whether Francophone or Creolophone).<sup>59</sup> Maryse

---

<sup>56</sup> Bernabé, Chamoiseau and Confiant, *Éloge de la créolité*, p. 20.

<sup>57</sup> Glissant, *Le Discours antillais*, pp. 524-525.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid. p. 21.

<sup>59</sup> In his article, 'Reading Rhythm and Listening to Caribbean History in Fiction by Jacques Roumain and Joseph Zobel', Munro shows how in Zobel's novel *La Rue Cases-Nègres* (1950) a

Condé, for example, notes that her credentials as an Antillean writer were questioned due to her inability to speak Creole fluently, ‘à ma mine, on voyait bien que dans mon enfance je n’avais pas été bercée par les merveilleux contes de Zamba et de Lapin’<sup>60</sup> and freely admits that, ‘quant au créole, c’est un fait, je ne parlais assez bien pour envisager d’en faire usage littéraire.’<sup>61</sup> However, she does not see this as a hindrance to her literary career, noting that literature goes beyond linguistic expression, ‘ce qui signifie en clair que chaque écrivain, français, francophone, ou même créole, doit trouver sa voix, forger sa langue indépendamment des matériaux des langages existants. C’est là l’ultime évidence de la plénitude de sa créativité.’<sup>62</sup> On the other hand, despite growing up in Paris and immersed in French life, Gisèle Pineau’s work is steeped in the particularity of Creole culture because, ‘[her] grandmother was the only one who spoke Creole, and that gave [her] a taste of the land, of the flavours of the land, the scents of the land.’<sup>63</sup> Pineau is keen to emphasize that use of Creole elements in French language texts (much like Chamoiseau, despite at times his work being criticized for exoticization) is not in order to achieve a sense of the ‘exotic’ because, ‘they [her novels] can concern anyone on the planet. True, the

---

sense of Creole culture is conveyed through rhythm and not just language, and how he develops this concept beyond the Negritude framework (of rhythm being primarily a vestige of African culture) and situates it in a Caribbean prose narrative. He notes that Zobel, ‘participates in a post-Negritude shift in the Francophone Caribbean from poetry to prose, from often esoteric verse to novels, memoirs and short stories that indicate a new emphasis on lived reality. With poetry firmly fixed in the literary imagination as a mystical mode of reconnecting with the mythical African past, prose becomes a favoured means of investigating the “real”, the everyday and the personal (which always nevertheless closely related with the collective). Yet the real is also an audible phenomenon. *La Rue Cases-Nègres* demonstrates Zobel’s interest in music, rhythm, and dance, an interest already apparent in his earlier collection of stories *Laghia de la mort* [1946] [...]’ Martin Munro, ‘Reading Rhythm and Listening to Caribbean History in Fiction by Jacques Roumain and Joseph Zobel’, *Journal of Modern Literature*, 31.4 (2008), 131-144 (p. 136).

<sup>60</sup> Maryse Condé, ‘Mode d’emploi: Comment devenir une écrivaine que l’on dit antillaise?’, *Nouvelles Études Francophones*, 22.1 (2007), 47-51 (p. 50).

<sup>61</sup> Ibid.

<sup>62</sup> Ibid.

<sup>63</sup> Valérie Loichot, “‘Devoured by Writing’ An Interview with Gisèle Pineau”, *Callaloo*, 30.1 (2007), 328-337 (p. 328).

environment is different, but I feed on that environment, on Creole culture, to nourish my texts. [...] Often I rehabilitate obsolete French words that have survived in Creole.’<sup>64</sup>

All of the corpus writers in this thesis understand the importance of speaking the ‘correct’ language impressed upon them by society, although, like Condé and Pineau, they all approach the problem from very different socioeconomic backgrounds; both Fanon and Chamoiseau came from relatively middle class families who emphasized the necessity of going to school and using French to improve social mobility, whereas Capécia only learnt to read and write French after her arrival in Paris in order to write her novel, having lived a life that up until that point could be considered more working class. By seeking to rehabilitate Creole into a literary framework, Chamoiseau elevates the status of this spoken language and transforms it into a literary language. In so doing, he actualizes Glissant’s argument in *Le Discours antillais*, demonstrating that language is crucial in the creation of identity and History for a nation.

Le langage de la nation est le langage dans lequel la nation *produit*. Si la nation est contrainte à ne pas produire, son langage s’aliène. Il devient dès lors une aspiration douloureuse, une quête qui ne se sait. Si la nation produit dans des formes opprimantes, son langage devient revendication, moteur agi d’une libération, exigence embusquée dans les taillis culturels. Si la nation produit dans des formes libérées, son langage en effet devient son équivalent, même s’il articule à partir d’une langue imposée.<sup>65</sup>

This use of language as a tool for developing a coherent identity will be examined more closely in Chapter 3.

---

<sup>64</sup> Ibid. p. 334.

<sup>65</sup> Glissant, *Le Discours antillais*, p. 617.

## Theoretical Context – Translation Studies and Postcolonial Studies, and their Intersection

In an early text exploring the interdisciplinary possibility between Translation and Postcolonial Studies, *Post-Colonial Translation, Theory and Practice* (1999), Bassnett and Trivedi noted that, ‘the act of translation always involves much more than language. Translations are always embedded in cultural and political systems, and in history.’<sup>66</sup> Indeed, translations have always been embedded in these systems, with translation, and translators, constituting an integral part of the conqueror’s arsenal throughout history. The importance of the role of translation in empire cannot be underestimated, as the success of every aspect of empire depended upon accurate communication, and trust in those undertaking the communication. This provoked logistical and linguistic problems for the colonizer, and Robinson here concisely sums up the main challenges for those coordinating the imperial project,

Was it better, for example, to send linguistically gifted members of the conquering power in to learn the indigenous languages of the conquered peoples, or to teach linguistically gifted members of the conquered culture to communicate in the imperial language? [...] What steps had to be taken to ensure the reliability of translation or interpreting across such power differentials? Who would vouch for the accuracy of a translation if the interpreter was the only available mediator between colonizer and colonized?<sup>67</sup>

Although translation has existed since the Classical era, and has been debated, discussed and dissected by scholars ranging from Cicero to Schleiermacher, Thomas Aquinas and Thomas More to Montaigne and Dryden, Benjamin and Derrida, it has only been in translation’s very recent past that the discipline has

---

<sup>66</sup> Susan Bassnett and Harish Trivedi, ‘Of colonies, cannibals and vernaculars’, in *Post-Colonial Translation, Theory and Practice*, ed. by Susan Bassnett and Harish Trivedi (London and New York: Routledge, 1999), pp 1-18 (p. 6).

<sup>67</sup> Robinson, *Translation and Empire* (Manchester: St. Jerome, 1997), pp. 10-11.



come to be systematically theorized.<sup>68</sup> However, St. Jerome is considered to be one of the forefathers of translation theory because he was one of the first who developed a cogent translation practice, arguing for a sense-for-sense mode of translation, rather than the word-for-word method favoured by his predecessors.<sup>69</sup> It was this translation method that became standard in European translation theory, and formed the basis of a more linguistic concept of the discipline, which persisted up until the very recent past,<sup>70</sup> that of domesticating translation, which Robinson describes as,

a primary tool of the empire insofar as it encourages colonial powers (or more generally the ‘stronger’ or ‘hegemonic’ cultures) to translate foreign texts into their own terms, thus eradicating cultural differences and creating a buffer zone of assimilated ‘sameness’ around them.<sup>71</sup>

Perhaps most importantly in the context of this thesis, it has been only twenty-five years since the ‘cultural turn’ of Translation Studies, a phrase coined by Bassnett and Lefevere, who were critical in the development of this branch of Translation Studies. It encouraged a greater interdisciplinary dialogue to open up between Cultural and Translation Studies and understood the possibilities of the effects of globalization upon identity, culture and translation.<sup>72</sup> Examining the

---

<sup>68</sup> The following translation anthologies provide a detailed overview of the main translation theories and theorists through time, and trace how the act of translation has developed into a discipline considered worthy of study itself: *Theories of Translation: An Anthology of Essays from Dryden to Derrida*, ed. by Rainer Schulte and John Biguenet (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1992). Douglas Robinson, *Western Translation Theories, from Herodotus to Nietzsche* (Manchester: St. Jerome, 1997) and *The Translation Studies Reader*, ed. by Lawrence Venuti (Oxford and New York: Routledge, 2012, 3<sup>rd</sup> edition).

<sup>69</sup> Derrida explains, ‘[...] Cicéron affranchit la traduction de son obligation envers le verbum, de sa dette envers le mot pour mot. L’opération qui consiste à convertir, à tourner (*convertere, vertere, transvertere*) n’a pas à se laisser prendre au mot ou à prendre le mot à la letter. Il suffit de faire passer l’idée, la figure, la force. Et la devise de saint Jérôme, qui fut avec Luther l’un des pères d’une certaine éthique de la traduction, une éthique qui survit même si elle est contestée dans notre modernité, c’est “*non verbum e verbo, sed sensum exprimere de sensu*”.’ Jacques Derrida, ‘Qu’est-ce qu’une traduction “relevante”?’ in *Quinzième Assises de la traduction littéraire* (Arles 1998) (Arles: Actes Sud, 1999), pp. 21-48 (p. 27).

<sup>70</sup> See Robinson, *Translation as Empire*, pp. 46-47.

<sup>71</sup> Robinson, *Translation as Empire*, p 109.

<sup>72</sup> See *Translation, History and Culture*, ed. by Susan Bassnett and André Lefevere (London and New York: Pinter Publishing, 1990).

cultural consequences of the corpus translator's choices and what the strategies employed mean for our understanding of postcolonial French literature are the key aims of this thesis. This suggests a focus on translation as a primarily human, cultural process,<sup>73</sup> which allows translators to enter into a meaningful dialogue together.

Language, culture, politics, history and an engagement with the fundamental aspects of the human condition (interaction and communication and social position frequently occur) are at the core of the corpus of texts forming the foundation of this thesis regardless of their genre. My examination of translations of Fanon, Chamoiseau and Capécia emphasizes the plurality of meanings in translation and how meaning shifts and changes over time in both the source text and the translated text. Therefore, I seek to explore how translators have used common, Western translation strategies in their work on French Caribbean texts and if this use has been appropriate for the purpose of translating literature of a Caribbean origin, considering how intertwined the identity of both the source and translated texts can become.

Translation inevitably became an important tool for all empires in the process of colonization because it allowed colonial powers such as Britain and France to

---

<sup>73</sup> The complexity of the syntax and code switching employed in almost all the corpus texts means that machine translation, especially at the time that many of the translations were completed, would not have been a viable means of translating these literary texts. Various machine translation tools now exist and are widely available to all, including the ubiquitous and sometimes comically incorrect Google Translate. Translation software is frequently used amongst professional translators, as it permits them to build banks of commonly used vocabulary, which is crucial when translating large quantities of text on a regular basis. Despite the recent technological developments, machine translation is still rarely used when translating literary texts. See D. Arnold, L. Balkan, R. Lee Humphreys, S. Meyer and L. Sadler, *Machine Translation: An Introductory Guide* (Oxford: NCC Blackwell, 1994) and also, Michael Cronin, *Translation in the Digital Age* (Oxford and New York: Routledge, 2013).

assert dominance over the indigenous and slave populations, and shape the colonies in their European image, with all official business and education being conducted in the colonizer's language. Indigenous languages and hybrid languages in development, such as Creole, were socially and culturally marginalized by the colonizer and the act of translation stood as both fact and symbol of the process of colonization. As Bassnett and Trivedi note, 'it is significant that the invention of the idea of the original [when translating] coincides with the period of early colonial expansion, when Europe began to reach outside its own boundaries for territory to appropriate.'<sup>74</sup> Therefore, the concept of the original text and (inferior) translation that can still be called upon today in translation studies is itself closely bound up with the practice and memories of colonial expansion. It is only now that we can,

perceive the extent to which translation was for centuries a one-way process, with texts being translated into European languages for European consumption, rather than as part of a reciprocal process of exchange. European norms have dominated literary production, and those norms have ensured that only certain kinds of text, those that will not prove alien to the receiving culture, come to be translated.<sup>75</sup>

Many early translation theorists and critics, including Bassnett and Trivedi, Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin, and Niranjana, have spoken about the power imbalances involved in translation, particularly in a postcolonial context. They have described it as a space in which colonialism and the cultural remnants of colonialism remain active. However in recent years the upsurge in interest in translation and translation theory (both in terms of translating a dominant language text into a local language and vice versa, and also in terms of incorporating the language of the Other into dominant language texts) began to foreground this power differential. Gentzler notes that in the 1990s,

---

<sup>74</sup> Bassnett and Lefevere (eds.), *Translation, History and Culture*, p. 2.

<sup>75</sup> Ibid. p. 5.

[...] Translation studies scholars focused on how textual practices were used by governments, publishers, universities, and other institutions of power to manipulate culture, generally in support of, or occasionally in resistance to, the status quo. Translation, often considered a marginal practice, was increasingly shown to be instrumental in the process of developing and maintaining power [...].<sup>76</sup>

Furthermore, the development of ‘créolité’ and its ‘creolized’ use of French, and Chamoiseau’s consequent use of a mix of French and Creole in his novels demonstrates a desire to ‘write back’ and (re)claim a space for the postcolonial in the literary canon, whether French or English. Indeed, as the exponents of Créolité note, not only did they reappropriate French, but they also enriched it with their use of Creole,

La créolité, comme ailleurs d’autres entités culturelles a marqué d’un sceau indélébile la langue française. Nous nous sommes approprié cette dernière. Nous avons étendu le sens de certains mots. Nous en avons dévié d’autres. Et métamorphosé beaucoup. Nous avons enrichie tant dans son lexique que dans sa syntaxe. Nous l’avons préservée dans moult vocables dont l’usage s’est perdu. Bref, *nous l’avons habitée*.<sup>77</sup>

Bearing in mind the comingling of these two languages, we must also question the appropriateness of the use of such a binary concept of translation as the basis on which to approach translating postcolonial Caribbean texts, especially when one translates a text of a Caribbean origin (albeit in French, a colonizing language) into English, thus moving from the space of the post-colonized to the post-colonizer. I shall also touch upon the complication of translating a Caribbean text written in French, as this already assumes a level of translation has taken place in the identity of the writer and the text before it even reaches the translator whose task it is to render it in English.

---

<sup>76</sup> Edwin Gentzler, *Translation and Identity in the Americas: New Directions in Translation Theory* (London and New York: Routledge, 2008), p. 1.

<sup>77</sup> Bernabé, Chamoiseau and Confiant, *Éloge de la Créolité*, p. 46 (emphasis in original).

In the thesis, I aim to map a movement from a binary translation theory to one that permits a dialogue between the source language and target language texts. This thesis will be supported by a methodological framework that will chart the development from strategies predicated upon the notion of the needs of the source text against those of the target language, and which seeks to translate the text using – broadly speaking - domesticating or foreignizing strategies (such as those of Lawrence Venuti and Gideon Toury, which will be analysed and used to facilitate a comparison of two pairs of translations of Frantz Fanon’s *Peau noire, masques blancs* and *Les Damnés de la terre* in Chapter 2). I shall consider how appropriate Venuti and Toury’s theories are in analyzing French literature of a Caribbean origin, and how relevant the binary translation structures are in Chapter 2. There, I shall also examine Anthony Pym’s theory of intercultural translation to assess how successful this system is in providing a framework for translating literature characterized by code-switching and multiculturalism. Whilst Pym’s theory is a more productive way of examining a space of textual dialogue, it still remains Eurocentric in its application. Therefore, I will move onwards to the possibility of developing Édouard Glissant’s theory of Relation into a workable translation theory, which expands on the poststructuralist possibility of the text living on through a third space of interlingual/cultural dialogue into a Caribbean context. Possible applications of this theory will be examined with reference to a corpus of three texts written by Patrick Chamoiseau in Chapter 3. The importance of this trajectory from an oppositional conception of languages and cultures to one which produces a liminal text, or one that lives on through the third cultural space between the two languages is significant because it refuses the colonial connotations of the superiority of the ‘original’

text (no matter its source origins). It is through the reciprocal mode of translation that, I would argue, a more faithful Caribbean identity can be rendered. Using a translation theory that takes account of the particular postcolonial provenance of the text is important because it recognizes the prevalence of European norms in translation that 'have dominated literary production, [and which] have ensured that only certain kinds of text, those that will not prove alien to the receiving culture, come to be translated'<sup>78</sup> and the need to overcome these Eurocentric practices. Indeed, Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin's argument in regard to 'post-colonial literary theory' is equally applicable to the concept of postcolonial translation theory, that it,

emerges from the inability of European theory to deal adequately with the complexities and varied cultural provenance of post-colonial writing. [...] Theories of style and genre, assumptions about the universal features of language, epistemologies and value systems are all radically questioned by the practices of post-colonial writing. Post-colonial theory has proceeded from the need to address this different practice. Indigenous theories have developed to accommodate the differences within the various cultural traditions as well as the desire to describe in a comparative way the features shared across these traditions.<sup>79</sup>

Whilst I do not discuss a specific postcolonial translation theory advanced by a postcolonial translation theorist in the context of the Caribbean (for, as far as I am aware, no Caribbean writers have yet produced a thorough theory exploring the nuances of translating Caribbean postcolonial texts), I do examine Édouard Glissant's writing on translation to be found in *Le Discours antillais* and *Poétique de la relation*. Glissant's theory of relation which discusses how all language and culture can be rhizomatically linked together and his belief that the art of translation could be a manifestation of this relation is examined as a possible framework for a translation theory that properly accommodates the

---

<sup>78</sup> Ibid. p. 5.

<sup>79</sup> Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths and Helen Tiffin, *The Empire Writes Back: Theory and Practice in Post-colonial Literatures* (London and New York: Routledge, 1989) p. 11.

particularities of postcolonial literature and how they interact with the wider world, and in particular, the Anglophone readership for whom it is translated.

Whilst it can be argued that Niranjana and Bhabha have played an important role in initially bridging the gap between translation and postcolonial studies, Bhabha's work in particular now attracts criticism. Niranjana's work (*Siting Translation* [University of California Press: Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1992]) focuses on the role of translation as a place in which the violence done to colonized citizens is echoed in the way in which the translation is completed, and sees translation ultimately as a way of allowing the colonized to resist colonial oppression and essentialism. Although the work was published relatively early on in the dialogue between Postcolonial and Translation Studies, it still provides a helpful way into the discussion of the postcolonial relationships that develop in the target language text. Bhabha's work on cultural hybridity and liminality can provide some background for examining the translation of postcolonial work, especially as much of it can be mapped from his discussions of Fanon's ideologies. Bhabha underscores the fact that Fanon, and indeed postcolonial writers generally, write from the borders of society and from a place of loss in terms of identity, as he notes,

[t]he access to the image of identity is only ever possible in the *negation* of any sense of originality or plenitude; the process of displacement and differentiation (absence/presence, representation/repetition) renders it a liminal reality.<sup>80</sup>

For Robinson, Bhabha's work demonstrates the instability and untranslatability of culture and, cultural transfer and translation when dealing with border cultures.

---

<sup>80</sup> Homi Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* (Oxford and New York: Routledge, 1994), p. 73 (emphasis in original).

Culture is ‘untranslatable’ for Bhabha not because each culture is unique, special, unlike all others, but because it is always mixed with other cultures, because culture always overflows the artificial borders that nations set up to contain it. Translation in the traditional sense requires stable differences between two cultures and their languages, which the translator then bridges; the mixing of cultures and languages in migrant and border cultures makes translation in that traditional sense impossible. But at the same time that mixing also makes translation perfectly ordinary, everyday, business as usual: bilinguals translate constantly; translation is a mundane fact of life. Thus Bhabha associates border cultures with both the untranslatability of culture and what he calls “cultural translation”.<sup>81</sup>

Whilst his description of the image of identity and its identification as being a ‘liminal reality’ does indeed resonate strongly with my understanding of the place of intersection between Postcolonial and Translation Studies, we must also remain wary of wholeheartedly endorsing Bhabha’s work due to its reliance on, and at times vague use of poststructuralist terminology, which in recent times has been criticized within the context of Translation and Cultural Studies. Syrotinski highlights the problematic elements of Bhabha’s reading of Derrida, noting that,

how far Bhabha succeeds in his attempts to articulate the ‘postcolonial provenance’ of poststructuralist theory, and whether this matches up with the emerging genealogical narrative of the North African ‘origins’ of French theory generally, remains to be seen. At the very least we will need to exercise greater terminological precision and care, since it is (or ought to be) common knowledge now that Derrida himself never used or subscribed to the term ‘poststructuralist’.<sup>82</sup>

Furthermore, Pettersson cautions against the use of, ‘in postcolonial criticism sweeping notions of hybridity’, claiming that they are ‘of little use, since the (post)colonial contexts differ so radically from case to case.’<sup>83</sup> Indeed, whilst all

---

<sup>81</sup> Robinson, *Translation and Empire*, p. 27.

<sup>82</sup> Michael Syrotinski, *Deconstruction and the Postcolonial: At the Limits of Theory* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2007), p. 3. In *Poststructuralism and Postcoloniality* Hiddleston too suggests that Derrida could be considered a ‘poststructuralist’ but also warns that, ‘the term is not one that he himself uses, and it risks narrowing the focus of a project that extends far beyond linguistics and structural anthropology into the history of Western philosophy’, Jane Hiddleston, *Poststructuralism and Postcoloniality* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2010), p. 21.

<sup>83</sup> Bo Pettersson, ‘The Postcolonial Turn in Literary Translation Studies: Theoretical Frameworks Revisited’, [http://www.uqtr.quebec.ca/AE/vol\\_4/petter.htm](http://www.uqtr.quebec.ca/AE/vol_4/petter.htm) (accessed 16.10.15).

Although the development of translation theory owes a great debt to the influence of poststructuralism, an examination of this shall not occupy a central role in my thesis. Whilst in its own way providing a crucial perspective on the discussion of postcolonial translation theory, the preponderance of poststructuralism in informing the theory has provoked an emphasis on the process of ‘theory’ rather than the practicality of ‘translation’. Nevertheless, poststructuralism



three of the corpus writers are Martinican and experience a sense of living ‘in-between’, the (post)colonial, geographical and cultural context for the creation of their work could not be more different. Whilst Fanon focuses on the physical manifestations of the impositions of colonialism upon Algerian colonized subjects, Chamoiseau emphasizes the cultural ramifications of language suppression and the assimilation policy in Martinique and Capécia explores the precarious position of black women in Martinique whilst resident in Paris, balanced between – for her – the conflicting demands of black and white men and it is from their liminal positions that they may act as observers of cultural policy and social change. Despite this, however, similarities exist between the writers and their relationship with language, particularly between Fanon and Chamoiseau and their subversion of social hierarchies in their use of French to express their political and social dissonance from that of the established French colonial order, and this chimes with Derrida’s exploration of the relationship with Self and Other. He focused on the ‘phenomena’ that, ‘blur [...] boundaries, cross them, and make their historical artifice appear, also their violence, meaning the relations of force that are concentrated there and actually capitalize themselves there interminably.’<sup>84</sup> As Hiddleston notes, ‘[...] his interrogation of the subject’s self-differentiation outside the framework of the political institution provides a starting point for a theorization of postcoloniality as the trace that

---

(and particularly Derrida’s work on language) informs, rather than shapes my argument because I should like to return to the central concern of the practice of translation in my work, and examine how theory can best serve a reimagining of a translation practice that meaningfully represents French Caribbean identity.

<sup>84</sup> Jacques Derrida, *Monolingualism of the Other; or, the Prosthesis of Origin*, trans. Patrick Mensah (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1998), p. 9.

resists circumscription by an ideology imposed on it from the outside'<sup>85</sup> and this process is mirrored in Chamoiseau and Fanon's own interrogation of the position of the 'subject's self-differentiation' from outside the French metropolitan socio-cultural framework.

For Petterson, attempting to extricate the practice of translation from an over-reliance on theory whilst maintaining the relevancy of postcolonial Translation Studies to our contemporary society is of utmost importance, and as such, theory must be shaped in such a way to retain this relevancy to the language to which it relates. He notes,

I consider postcolonial literature and criticism and postcolonial translation of such momentous importance to contemporary literature, literary studies and translation studies that the theoretical frameworks that inform our view of them should be plausible (to say the least), and should build on actual, contextual, historically-informed, sociocultural (including ideological) and textual groundedness in at least two cultures – and a willingness to employ this groundedness in order to bring about more discriminating understanding of those cultures and their artifacts.<sup>86</sup>

Because of the need to ground translation theory in an understanding of the complexity of the literary and cultural interplay of the source and target language texts, Pettersson argues for a movement away from poststructuralist frameworks in postcolonial Translation Studies. He suggests that, 'what is called for now are broader frameworks, which are able to account for originary, mediating, receptive as well as textual aspects in literary communication – and case studies recognizing this complexity.'<sup>87</sup> The possibility of using such an 'originary, mediating, receptive' framework in translation analysis, based on the practical

---

<sup>85</sup> Jane Hiddleston, 'Jaques Derrida: Colonialism, Philosophy and Autobiography', in *Postcolonial Thought in the French Speaking World*, ed. by Charles Forsdick and David Murphy (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2009), pp. 53-64 (p. 58).

<sup>86</sup> Ibid.

<sup>87</sup> Ibid.

application of a theory to case studies will be examined in Chapters 2 and 3 of this thesis.

In this chapter, it will also be necessary to define precisely what is meant by the term ‘postcolonial’. This is all the more pressing given the fact that Martinique and Martinican literature and culture frequently falls under this heading; despite not actually ever properly being a postcolonial country, having been made a *département* of France in 1946.

The sociolinguistic in-betweenness that this process of departmentalization inevitably creates in Martinican identity and society, neither entirely French (although ostensibly so in their educational, legal and commercial relations) but neither fully Creole either, is particularly evident in Chamoiseau and Capécia’s novels for whom liminality and questions of identity characterize their work. Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin have contributed greatly to what I understand to be postcolonial, particularly in a literary context. Their description of postcolonial literature in *The Empire Writes Back* is notable because they describe the literature as emerging out of colonialism whilst simultaneously engaging with it (such as the work of Fanon and Chamoiseau), and because it is precisely this action that must be replicated in translating postcolonial texts, with the translation emerging from the source language text whilst simultaneously engaging with it. They write,

[post-colonial literatures] emerged in their present form out of the experience of colonization and asserted themselves by foregrounding the tension with the imperial power, and by emphasizing their differences from the assumptions of the imperial centre. It is this which makes them distinctively post-colonial.<sup>88</sup>

---

<sup>88</sup> Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin, *The Empire Writes Back*, p. 2.

Fanon, Chamoiseau and Capécia all write the vast majority of their work in French (Chamoiseau uses Creole in his work for dialogue amongst Martinicans and as does Capécia, but to a lesser degree). However, this did not prevent them from critically approaching the role that French language and culture played in their lives. Following his formative experiences of the Admiral Robert occupation of Martinique and as a soldier and a student in France during, and directly following, World War Two, Fanon came to realize the deeply racist attitude that many French held toward the country's DOMs. This led him consequently to critically reassess his relationship with 'la mère patrie' and to begin to reevaluate and position himself against the views he had been taught as a school child in Martinique. Peter Hudis explains the broad and lasting affect that the Admiral Robert occupation in particular had upon Martinique, and significantly, Fanon's thinking.

The France to which many Martinicans had looked began to appear very different when it took the form of 10,000 white racist sailors abusing and demeaning them. As a result, the Martinicans began looking very differently at themselves. *A new sense of self emerged. A cultural phenomenon* – the formation of a black identity – was actually part of a social reflux, a response to the sudden influx of large numbers of white Europeans who vilified the Martinicans as "black". What Fanon later developed in his philosophical works – "It is the colonist who *fabricated* and *continues to fabricate* the colonized subject." – was initially confirmed for him right here, in his lived experience following the arrival of the French fleet in 1939.<sup>89</sup>

Therefore, in his philosophical and psychiatric writings he uses the language in which he was educated as a tool to disseminate his radical anti-racist, anti-colonial message as widely as possible, whilst maintaining a distance from French socio-political policies. In *Éloge de la créolité* Chamoiseau argues that he and his fellow creolists do not want to eliminate French entirely from writing and dialogue, but to use it in their own way, for their own means. Fusing the use

---

<sup>89</sup> Peter Hudis, *Frantz Fanon: Philosopher of the Barricades* (London: Pluto Press, 2015), p.16 (emphasis in original).

of French and Creole together, they create a literature and language which is their own and which is representative of a different way of using French, a way of claiming back the cultural capital of the French language in an alternative project.

*Nous l'avons conquise, cette langue française. Si le créole est notre langue légitime, la langue française (provenant de la classe blanche créole) fut tour à tour (ou en même temps) octroyée et capturée, légitimée et adoptée. La créolité, comme ailleurs d'autres entités culturelles a marqué d'un sceau indélébile la langue française. Nous nous sommes approprié cette dernière. Nous avons étendu le sens de certains mots. Nous en avons dévié d'autres. Et métamorphosé beaucoup.*<sup>90</sup>

In contrast to Fanon and Chamoiseau's capture of the French language to propose a radically different system of being, Capécia's written French was deemed so unsatisfactory that it was supplemented and reworked by her French, metropolitan editors. This provokes questions about the many layers of translation to which her novels, and Capécia herself, have been subjected and will be examined in Chapter 4, and recalls the connections between translation (in both the literal and metaphorical sense I shall be exploring in Chapter 4) and creative writing. Indeed, the act of self-translation will be viewed as an act of creative writing. Therefore, whilst every writer I examine in the thesis work as French citizens, coming from post-colonial Martinique, their use of French is as varied as the messages that their texts deliver.

The relationship between translation and postcolonial literature has been complicated and often contentious following the growth of interdisciplinary Translation and Postcolonial Studies work over the past two decades. This is not only because of the results of the process of translation itself, but also because of the questions it brings up concerning the very core of postcolonial debate, such

---

<sup>90</sup> Bernabé, Chamoiseau and Confiant, *Éloge de la Créolité*, p. 46 (emphasis in original).

as that of identity, resituating the Self as a postcolonial citizen against the Other of the ex-colonizer and the creation of a new social and political way of being, and the way these questions can be equally applicable in either discipline. It also concerns the historical role translation has played in colonialism and in, ‘disseminating an ideologically motivated image of colonized peoples. [...] [The metaphor has been used] of the colony as an imitative and inferior translational copy whose suppressed identity has been overwritten by the colonizer.’<sup>91</sup> Considering then the potent imagery associated with translation in a postcolonial context, it is important to emphasize the questions concerning the possibility of translating an intercultural novel of both French and Creole languages, without losing the multiplicity of meaning inherent in its character and the ability of an Anglophone mother tongue translator to approach the issue of code-switching (amongst other challenges in translation).

Here, I would like to concentrate on an examination of the wider implications of the process, product and philosophy of translation in a postcolonial Martinican context. The understanding of the cultural role that language plays in identity creation is crucially important because of the role it plays in bringing the literature and representing that language (or languages) to a wider audience abroad. How that identity is represented in translation will be of especial interest in this thesis. The rest of this section will deal with the historical legacy of translation, and how postcolonial theory can support the examination of translation; the implications of this legacy on not only the development of the postcolonial source culture but also that of the target language audience; and

---

<sup>91</sup> Jeremy Munday, *Introducing Translation Studies: Theories and Applications* (London and New York: Routledge, 2001), p. 134.

finally, the parallels that can be drawn between the areas of postcolonial studies and translation, noting particularly how the relationship between the Self and Other, regardless of their origins, can be mirrored in them. Central to this are the themes of power relations of varying forms and of the restitution of identity, and more specifically, forging a collective identity through the sharing of memory in postcolonial Martinique and their relationship to the translated text. Throughout the thesis I shall use the terms ‘source’ and ‘target language’ to describe the provenance of the original text and destination of the translation, with ‘target language audience’ referring to the world of the Anglophone reader at which the translator aims. This is a way of standardizing the reference points with each text, and is more about the chronological ordering of the texts than promoting any sense of hierarchy between the texts, as it is obvious that translation is much more than an exchange between two polarities. Indeed, ‘[i]n the postcolonial context, “translation” often stands for the alteration of the colonizing language through its mixing with the languages of the colonized and vice versa.’<sup>92</sup>

The development of Creole from a principally spoken language to a written form in literature demands consideration due to its significance within the Martinican historical context and also because of the consequences this has for a translator of a Franco-Creole text. The use of Creole in the texts<sup>93</sup> focused upon in this study has two main purposes. Firstly it is to reposition the language of the ‘native’ speaker at a level that makes it an ‘appropriate’ mode of communication beyond the street and casual discourse and into the realm of literature; secondly, despite the fact that Creole was initially the language of both the colonizer and

---

<sup>92</sup> Kate Sturge, *Representing Others: Translation, Ethnography and the Museum* (Manchester: St. Jerome, 2007), p. 12.

<sup>93</sup> Principally in the work of Chamoiseau, but also to be found, to a lesser extent in the work of Mayotte Capécia.

the colonized, it was later stigmatized as a language of the lower social classes, and the use of it in literature begins to revalorize its role in storytelling which was so important in its traditional oral format. Therefore, it also underscores the loss of the oral culture of storytelling so prevalent in nineteenth and early twentieth century Martinique and an attempt to compensate for, and (ironically) give a voice to, this loss by shifting Creole from a spoken language to a written one – in essence, moving the location of the storytelling.

The interplay between French and Creole highlights the impossibility of neatly separating the categories of Self and Other in language use because postcolonial literature demonstrates the necessity of espousing the language of the colonizer to put forward the identity of the colonized, and the plurality inherent in meaning and identity in postcolonial texts. Sherry Simon notes that,

texts, like cultures, like national territories, are more and more the sites of competing languages, diverse idioms, conflicting codes. This 'Otherness within' works to reconfigure a practice of translation defined in the West since the Renaissance as a transfer between linguistically unified texts. Increasingly, translation and writing become part of a single process of creation, as cultural interactions, border situations, move closer and closer to the centre of our cultures. Writing across languages, writing through translation becomes a particularly strong form of expression at a time when national cultures have themselves become diverse, inhabited by plurality. Whether in the context of the tensions of bilingualism or the developing modes of global vehicular idioms, the mixing of codes points to an aesthetics of cultural pluralism whose meanings have yet to be fully explored.<sup>94</sup>

The diversification of national identity that Simon mentions underscores the fact that there is no coherent national identity to which one might return (and that this coherent national identity may itself also be fallacy), and indeed, no real possibility that a coherent assimilation policy may exist, predicated as it was on

---

<sup>94</sup> Sherry Simon, 'Translating and interlingual creation in the contact zone: Border writing in Quebec', in *Post-Colonial Translation, Theory and Practice*, ed. by Bassnett and Trivedi, pp. 58 – 73 (pp. 72-73).



*the* dissemination of the national identity. It draws our attention to the fact that thus, just as it is impossible to transition seamlessly between identities, it may also be necessary for the postcolonial writer and translator to reject European translational norms described by Niranjana and to live in a third space, one of unease, changing perceptions and expectations, where, ‘the non-synchronous temporality of global and national cultures opens up a cultural space – a third space – where the negotiation of incommensurable differences creates a tension peculiar to borderline existences.’<sup>95</sup> The translational and cultural encounter created in this third space, is in this case not necessarily one of hybridity, as Bhabha would put it, but one in which the two liminal existences of postcolonial literature and translation can enter into a dialogue, allowing for newness in translation to be created. Thus, the translator must recognize that, ‘this space of the translation of cultural difference *at the interstices* is infused with that Benjaminian temporality of the present which makes graphic a moment of transition, not merely the continuum of history.’<sup>96</sup> This ‘Benjaminian temporality’ refers to his concept of the ‘liminality’ of translation. Indeed he sees it as, ‘[...] a strange stillness that defines the present in which the very writing of historical transformation becomes uncannily visible.’<sup>97</sup> This allows translators the opportunity to use translation as a space of reconciliation between the past repression of languages and the culture they represent, and the restitution of this culture as a functioning and valued part of the postcolonial future for both source and target language audiences.

---

<sup>95</sup> Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*, p. 312.

<sup>96</sup> Ibid. (emphasis in original).

<sup>97</sup> Ibid.

In *Siting Translation* Niranjana touches upon a paradoxical quality of translation. Whilst translation is often thought to displace the situated nature of the source texts and has been criticized as taking part in, ‘the fixing of colonized cultures’, it also, she notes, ‘provides a place in “history” for the Colonized.’<sup>98</sup> However, whilst translation *has* provided this place in history for the colonized culture, in the context of Martinique, it is done so frequently in the language of the/a colonizer, reinforcing the fact that the lived experience of the colonized is still viewed through the prism of the colonizer’s understanding. The extension of colonial power through the use of language controlled not only day-to-day business but also the creation of a Martinican sense of identity and history.

The usurping of the ‘native’ and localized Creole by the use of French as prescribed by the colonizing country highlights the relative ease with which the French imposed their cultural mores on the country and began translating Martinican socio-cultural values into those more in line with the metropole. Brought together with the influence that historical events have upon the identity of the colonized citizen, these are two key elements to be considered when translating texts of postcolonial import. The French assimilationist policy instigated in 1870 had a great influence upon the development of French as the language of socio-cultural mobility, economic improvement and power – both symbolic and actual. In his work on memory, Gabriel Motzkin notes that, ‘historical consciousness, by transforming the relations between memory and

---

<sup>98</sup> Tejaswini, Niranjana, *Siting Translation: History, Post-Structuralism and the Colonial Context* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992), p. 3.

identity, also changed the structures of the relations between self and other.’<sup>99</sup> For him, ‘historical consciousness requires the preservation of the other, and hence a careful definition of the boundaries of the other as an inhabitant of our historical identity.’<sup>100</sup> One must bear in mind then the fact that the boundaries of consciousness are, as Motzkin put forward, set by historical circumstance and that they are now inscribed in the colonized, and indeed postcolonial, unconscious. Moreover, when translating, it is also important to consider the degree to which the translator’s historical understanding, consciousness and perception influence the way that they translate a text.

Therefore, Glissant states that undertaking a re-understanding of Martinican history will have far reaching consequences; for, ‘se battre contre l’un de l’Histoire, pour la Relation des histoires, c’est peut-être à la fois retrouver son temps vrai et son identité: poser en des termes inédits la question du pouvoir.’<sup>101</sup> Forcing the use of French and adhering to metropolitan concepts of society, not only brought Martinique more into line with the ‘Hexagone’<sup>102</sup> but also ensured that any attempts to create a notion of the Self, unrelated to a foreign Other, was impossible. However, although the French colonizers attempted to force the colonized to undergo, ‘a process of “othering” [...] which views the knowledge and ways of life in the colony as distorted or immature versions of what can be

---

<sup>99</sup> Gabriel Motzkin, ‘Memory and Cultural Translation’, in *The Translatability of Cultures, Figurations of the Space Between*, ed. by Sanford Budick and Wolfgang Iser (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1996), pp. 265-81 (p. 269).

<sup>100</sup> Ibid.

<sup>101</sup> Glissant, *Le Discours antillais*, p. 159.

<sup>102</sup> The ‘départementalisation’ of Martinique in 1946 makes the question of how to create a postcolonial identity all the more complex. On the one hand, it is vital to reconstruct for oneself one’s own identity rather than that imposed by the ‘mainland’; on the other, one is still technically under the dominance of this colonizing power.

found in “normal” or Western society,’<sup>103</sup> colonized citizens were more than willing and capable of creating their own identity in counterpoint to these ideals provided for them, encouraging a movement away from the liminal position in society ascribed by the colonizers.

The challenge here is for translators, such as our translators of Fanon, Chamoiseau and Capécia, working in an Anglophone context to recognize the historical significance of translation in a colonized (or postcolonized) context whilst attempting to maintain, or resituate, the characteristics of the Other without giving priority to those of the Westernized Self, or indeed, reducing it to a portrayal of a simple dualism of ‘Self’ against ‘Other’. It is also one of refusing a reductive representation of the colonized in order to fit with certain Western preconceptions and stereotypes of what a colonized citizen ‘should’ be or sound like. Furthermore, it is about balancing the expectations of the target language audience with the understanding that translation does not create the text, only brings it into another place of existing. The influence of European norms over the translation of postcolonial texts should be considered, which, ‘have ensured that only certain kinds of texts, those that will not prove alien to the receiving culture come to be translated’<sup>104</sup>, alien both in terms of social practices and cultural peculiarities. This statement goes against the very principle of translation, in that it is – fundamentally – to bring the work to a wider audience across different countries, and done so in a way ‘faithful’ to the source text. The influence of European norms must be noted, but equally one must be wary of them, in order to prevent ‘alien’ texts disappearing from an increasingly

---

<sup>103</sup> Niranjana, *Siting Translation*, p. 11.

<sup>104</sup> Bassnett and Trivedi (eds.), *Post-colonial Translation*, p. 5.

Americentric and Eurocentric worldview. Despite what Niranjana states that translation works as, ‘a transparent presentation of something that already exists, [with] the “original” [...] actually [brought] into being through translation’<sup>105</sup>, it does not – and should not – function as a creator of *absolute* newness but as a route between two places. In sum, whilst it is undoubted that a translator is a *creator* of texts, and someone who can shape the content of a foreign language literary canon, he or she should attempt to move away from the ‘mimicry’ that can be seen in some work, not in an attempt to ‘exoticize’ a text in order to increase its appeal amongst the target language market, but to, ‘[replace it] by a theory and practice which embraces difference and absence as material signs of power rather than negation, of freedom not subjugation, of creativity not limitation.’<sup>106</sup> That is, to see translation as a tool which can be used to open up spaces of dialogue (recalling the ‘Benjaminian temporality’ mentioned earlier) and as a way of being able to foreground the existence of the subaltern position as an example of embracing ‘difference and absence as material signs of power’ in the choice of a text for translation.

At the same time however, it is a difficult balancing act for the translator to strike between emphasizing the inherent notion of ‘difference and absence’ in the postcolonial text, and overstating it, returning the postcolonial text to the category of the novel and exotic and revisiting predetermined European translational norms. In so doing, the exoticisation and foreignization that s/he inscribes into the work has two possible conclusions. Firstly, it acts essentially as propaganda – putting forward the perpetuation of and fascination with

---

<sup>105</sup> Niranjana, *Siting Translation*, p. 3.

<sup>106</sup> Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin, *The Empire Writes Back*, p. 166.

historical colonial ideas about the colonized citizen, and casting the colonized as something to be observed because, ‘colonial discourse produces the colonized as a social reality which is at once an ‘other’ and yet entirely knowable and visible.’<sup>107</sup> Secondly and more positively, however, a translation which foreignizes the source text, by deliberately foregrounding the difference between cultures allows that which renders it ‘other’ to shine through, rather than domesticating a text, which has the effect often of flattening out any ‘foreign’ cultural or social references. Domestication often makes it easier to understand and relate to for a target language readership, frequently seen in the 1967 Grove Press translation by Charles Lam Markmann of Fanon’s *Peau noire, masques blancs* which will be discussed at length later in my thesis. The foreignizing style includes elements which for Venuti, create a, ‘good translation [which] is minoritizing: [releasing] the remainder by cultivating a heterogeneous discourse, opening up the standard dialect and literary canons to what is foreign to themselves, to the substandard and the marginal.’<sup>108</sup>

To consider Anglophone translation from a historical point of view, the aim of the translator is twofold. Firstly, it is to allow the translated text to work in the target language’s socio-cultural framework without having values previously inscribed upon both it, and, by extension, the postcolonial society associated with it. This action is recalled in the translation of *Peau noire, masques blancs* by Richard Philcox in 2008. Following the translation in 1967 which radically altered many of the philosophical and psychiatric themes of the text, which

---

<sup>107</sup> Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*, p. 101.

<sup>108</sup> Lawrence Venuti, *The Scandals of Translation – Towards an ethics of difference* (Routledge: London and New York, 1998), p. 11.

meant it fitted into the context of the American civil rights movement, Philcox recognized the need to reposition the work within a more scholarly context, restoring the meanings that were lost in the first translation to the text. He writes of his decision to translate *Les Damnés de la terre*, ‘translating a dead man means stepping very warily though a minefield littered with the debris of another time and another translation. [...] I felt I had to bring a dead translation back to life’<sup>109</sup> and much the same could be said of his translation of *Peau noire, masques blancs*. In this regard, it is able to assist the re-situation of the postcolonial source language text to a place within the Francophone literary canon without the need for recourse back to essentializing stereotypes that previously surrounded the work. Secondly, Anglophone translators must take it as their moral responsibility ‘not to be “faithful” but to make principled and if possible accountable choices on how to produce the words and images that will enter the global circuit of cultural representations.’<sup>110</sup>

History influences not just the conditions in which a translation is brought about but also the cultural ramifications of the translations, for both the source and target language audiences. The history and culture of a country, as Glissant described, are tightly bound together and the development of a true cultural identity depends on the person’s, and society more widely, relationship to the national history. This then emphasizes the point that Brisset rightly makes that, ‘translation becomes the act of reclaiming, of recentring of the identity, a reterritorializing operation. It does not create a new language, but it elevates a

---

<sup>109</sup> Richard Philcox, ‘On Retranslating Fanon, Retrieving A Lost Voice’, in Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, trans. Richard Philcox (New York: Grove Press, 2004), pp. 241-251 (p. 250).

<sup>110</sup> Sturge, *Representing Others*, p. 3.

dialect [for example, the regional use of Creole in Martinique] to the status of a national and cultural language.’<sup>111</sup>

It is clear that one of the major ramifications of a legacy of colonialism, which will also emerge in translation, is the question of how to construct a cultural identity coming from a postcolonized society. The power relationships brought into being in linguistic colonialism are revisited in the question of cultural dominance; this is repeated again in the power struggle between source and target language texts, with the translator’s choice between domesticating and foreignizing translation techniques. The focus of this section is on what happens as a result of the tension in the search for dominance over the postcolonial society; which culture will be linked predominantly to the overarching construct of postcolonial identity, how the continuing imposition of European norms in translation affects the cultural identity of a society and how the loss (or erasure) of the culture of storytelling will impact on the literature of the postcolonial place (recalling the situation in which Solibo and his community find themselves in *Solibo magnifique*, their way of life slowly eroded by the increasing encroachment of the metropolitan lifestyle and economy on their traditions and cultures). How can connections between the source and the target language cultures be meaningfully established when the cultural capital of the postcolonial place means that the values and transparency of the translation may be compromised?

---

<sup>111</sup> Annie Brisset, ‘The Search for a Native Language: Translation and Cultural Identity’, in *The Translation Studies Reader*, Third Edition, ed. by Lawrence Venuti (Oxford and New York: Routledge, 2012), pp. 281 – 311 (p. 284).



Culture must also be considered in terms of its commodification by both colonized and colonizing forces. What is it worth to each party to have their cultural norms dominate in Martinique? For Glissant, the role that the new cultural development plays is vital, not just in terms of identity, but also in terms of the ability for Martinicans to relate productively and creatively to their country. He notes in *Le Discours antillais*,

[l]es structures de la société, ses réflexes, sont ici une résultante de l'acte colonial et ne s'enracinent pas dans un avant [...]. Pour un pays qui n'est pas sûr de son passé, la non-productivité est une carence irrémédiable. Elle frappe l'être de stérilité. Elle déclenche une non-créativité, renforcée en l'occurrence par la consommation passive de 'produits culturels' extérieurs.<sup>112</sup>

Therefore, the role that translation plays in this regard is one not just of pure linguistic transfer but also one of commercial and cultural significance, and ultimately that of identity. Sartre sees, 'le nègre comme le travailleur blanc, [qui] est victime de la structure capitaliste de notre société'<sup>113</sup> and this echoes Glissant's assertion that because of the economic dependency that Martinique has upon France, true freedom and therefore literary expression becomes impossible to uncover. Nesbitt describes Glissant as examining 'crises of production' in *Le Discours antillais* that include,

[...] crises of economic production (decline of the plantation system, violation of productive forces following departmentalization); crises of historical production (absence of historical dynamism and the failure of historical representation, memory and self-understanding), crises of aesthetic production (poetic mimetism, subordination to monological models such as Negritude), and crises in the production of autonomous subjective experience (subordination and assimilation to French culture, the manic, neurotic character of Antillean experience, erasure and blockage of communal subjectivity).<sup>114</sup>

---

<sup>112</sup> Glissant, *Le Discours antillais*, pp. 166–167.

<sup>113</sup> Sartre, 'Orphée noir', p. xiii.

<sup>114</sup> Nick Nesbitt, 'Caribbean Literature in French', in *The Cambridge History of African and Caribbean Literature*, Vol. 2, ed. by F. Abiola Irele and Simon Gikandi (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), pp. 643–669 (p. 651).

These ‘crises of production’ can equally manifest themselves in translations, particularly when power structures are imbalanced between source and target language societies, and demonstrate the value of literature as a commodity.

Finally, having examined some of the historical and cultural considerations surrounding translation, I come to the parallels that may be found between the Martinican postcolonial experience and translation itself. Here, I shall argue that the two areas have much in common and indeed, much to learn from each other which, in turn, will enhance the ability of the translator to adequately make, as Sturge suggests, ‘principled and [...] accountable choices on how to produce the words.’<sup>115</sup> This process of mutual understanding will help translation move away from arguments of its complicity in colonialism towards a practice that at once allows a faithful rendering of the source text in translation and the possibility of a hybrid quality to be found in the ‘interstitial passages and processes of cultural difference that are inscribed in the ‘in-between’, in the temporal break-up that weaves the global text’<sup>116</sup> – however problematic that may be.<sup>117</sup>

Both translation and the postcolonial experience can be said to be mediated through the framework of the Other. Translation takes the work of the source language writer, (un)consciously passes it through his or her own lived experience and produces a work which s/he sees as a rendering of the source text.

---

<sup>115</sup> Sturge, *Representing Others*, p. 3.

<sup>116</sup> Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*, p. 310.

<sup>117</sup> As I have previously mentioned, this repositioning of translations (and indeed, re-translations) has figured largely in the history of the translation of the work of Frantz Fanon. This will be discussed at length later in my thesis. Although the newer translations take into account a more ‘scholarly’ view of the work he undertook, it is nevertheless important to remember that the work is also completed with an understanding of the themes put forward in the first translations and the impact that these had on the Anglophone readership, not only in the developing world of postcolonial studies but also on the general audience of politically engaged readers.

Through the legacy of the assimilation project which lasted until 1946 when the departmentalization of Martinique occurred, the postcolonial experience is one which has often been characterized, as I have previously mentioned, as being viewed through the prism of the colonizer and the victim of the imposition of essentialising characteristics (concerning both language and culture). Chamoiseau comments on the flattening of the influence of Creole in Martinique, because by imposing the French culture upon the islanders, everything they could situate themselves against in the formation of their cultural identity is lost,

le pays s'était modernisé en abondances à consommer. Nos coutumes avaient muté au rythme de délicieuses importations, tandis que nos poèmes dénonçaient des violences coloniales devenues obsolètes. Cette transformation n'avait soulevé aucun obstacle, aucun barrage primaire, même irrationnel.<sup>118</sup>

This flattening of cultural resonances can also be seen to take place in translation.<sup>119</sup> The notion of translation and the postcolonial experience being at the mercy of outsider forces recalls the overarching theme of power relations that have been studied elsewhere in this introduction and emphasizes the need to break away from the norms that tend to govern the understanding of both translations and postcolonial identity. The task that needs to be undertaken by both postcolonial writer and translator is one that develops their own identity, independent of preconditioned expectations or demands from the source or target language audiences.

---

<sup>118</sup> Patrick Chamoiseau, *Écrire en pays dominé* (Paris: Éditions Gallimard, 1997), pp. 216-217.

<sup>119</sup> See for example the contrast in the translations of the title of chapter five of *Peau noire, masques blancs*, 'l'expérience vécue du Noir'. In 1967 Markmann translates it as 'The Fact of Blackness' whilst in 2008, Philcox renders it as 'The Lived Experience of the Black Man'. Here we can see in the 1967 translation a flattening of the philosophical and psychiatric resonances and cultural influences on the life of the black man, in order for it to probably appeal more to a target language readership of people involved in the American Black civil rights movement.

One of the ways in which translation and postcolonialism can break away from falling into the trap of adhering to preconceived norms is precisely to seize back the power from that which governs them – the demands of the target language audience and market forces, and the ghost of the colonizer. It is necessary for the translator to assert their identity as one who does not ‘popularize’ work for the sake of the demands of the general public but who according to Ricœur instead ‘makes our language put on the stranger’s clothes’ and suffers for his art as he

[stresses] the importance of a labour both of memory and of mourning [the loss of the possibility of a perfect translation]. [...]. This emphasis on the labour character of translation refers to the common experience of tension and suffering which the translator undergoes as *he/she checks the impulse to reduce the otherness of the other, thereby subsuming alien meaning into one’s own scheme of things*.<sup>120</sup>

For Ricœur, the translator’s identity is as a transporter of meaning, who recognizes a translation is never going to be a complete transferal from one language to another, but at the same time knows also that they should not infer or overlay meaning where there is none. This is particularly pertinent with regard to the translation of postcolonial literature, when the translator must be hyperaware of the ramifications of flattening cultural reference points in translation, in a genre of literature that is attempting to break away from being recognized only in relation to the colonial influence.

Similarly, the postcolonial Martinican identities must now be viewed (by its own citizens, and recipients of its translated work alike) as something that is influenced by historical colonization, but no longer defined entirely by it. One can call again upon Chamoiseau’s use of both French and Creole in *Solibo*

---

<sup>120</sup> Richard Kearney, ‘Ricœur’s philosophy of translation’ in Paul Ricœur, *On Translation*, trans. Eileen Brennan (Oxford and New York: Routledge, 2006), p. xvi (my emphasis).

*magnifique*, and the more general project of Créolité, to illustrate how it is possible to accept the colonial influence and move beyond it. He confounds expectations by writing in an amalgamation of both French and Creole, allowing him to, ‘in a sense [secede] from both Martinique and France, parallel to the manner in which the Créolité he advocates must break from Africa, Europe and Asia.’<sup>121</sup> Here, he demonstrates how it is possible to write about postcolonialism, the loss of elements crucial to a postcolonial identity (such as oral storytelling culture and the loss of community by extension) and do so in such a way that his language use allows him to remain both inside and outside the community he describes, further highlighting the liminal position of the postcolonial reality. It also is a neat reversal of the power dynamic of the colonized era, in that he changes the use of French from being the preserve of the official island bodies into something that he can manipulate and change for his own purposes. Although he, ‘cuts, irons, crumples, twists words to fit the order he wants to depict’<sup>122</sup> and is free to do so - it being *his* language - this is where the similarity with the identity of the translator ends.

To conclude, it is incontrovertible that the historical and cultural influences of the colonized past will affect not only the source language culture, but also their translation and the perception of them in the target language text. The power structures that lie not only between the colonizer and colonized, but also between the source and target language text are not to be underestimated, but likewise, are not to be seen as unwavering. Scholars of Translation Studies and translators

---

<sup>121</sup> Rose-Myriam Réjouis, ‘Sublime Tumble’ in Patrick Chamoiseau, *Solibo Magnificent*, trans. Rose-Myriam Réjouis and Val Vinokurov (London: Granta, 1999), p. 183.

<sup>122</sup> Ibid. p. 184.

themselves must take care not to hold back the cultural and linguistic progress that postcolonial writers are making in terms of the creation of their own literary and cultural identity. As previously mentioned, it is necessary to refuse outdated European norms and translational tropes when dealing with postcolonial literature. Appropriate translations can go some way to reintroducing a new postcolonial identity into a wider Western context - it is therefore the translator's responsibility to resist the temptation to overlay source language cultural understanding with a gloss of their own. Despite all this, however, the foundations and concerns translation remain the same, that of accurate dialogue through the establishment of reciprocal trust between translator and the translated. Here, Susan Bassnett echoes the concerns of the first colonial settlers when she writes that,

we all need to feel we can trust a translator; understanding the constraints upon a translator and recognizing the measures that the translator can take in order to escape those constraints is an important step towards establishing that trust.<sup>123</sup>

---

<sup>123</sup> Bassnett and Lefevere (eds.), *Translation, History and Culture*, p. 13.



## Chapter 2

### **An Analysis of the translations of Frantz Fanon's *Peau noire, masques blancs* (1952)**

#### **Introduction**

The importance of Frantz Fanon's 1952 text *Peau noire, masques blancs* in the development of postcolonial thought (a predominantly Anglophone area of study) cannot be doubted. It lays down the foundation of his future work, has informed debate in a wide range of disciplines, from philosophy to psychiatry, and chimed with American black civil rights groups' ideologies.<sup>124</sup> In more recent times, Fanon has been co-opted into protests concerning the murder of several black American men by the police, demonstrating the continuing relevance of Fanon's thought to protest movements across the world. Hudis notes that these protests (mis)quoted Fanon's text *The Wretched of the Earth* with a 'truncated' comment in support of their cause, "“When we revolt it's not for a particular culture. We revolt simply because, for many reasons, we can no longer breathe.”"<sup>125</sup> Still, Hudis does not appear to consider it a problem if 'Fanon's words were quoted a bit out of context'<sup>126</sup> because '[it] is less important than the fact that his ideas are seen by many to speak to the urgency of the moment.'<sup>127</sup> However, as hinted at above, if we consider the language in which the majority of these interactions concerning the text occur, it is in English,

---

<sup>124</sup> See Macey, *Frantz Fanon*, pp. 23-25.

<sup>125</sup> Hudis, *Frantz Fanon*, p.1.

<sup>126</sup> Ibid.

<sup>127</sup> Ibid.



rather than French in which they were originally written. It is the consequences of this that shall be explored in this chapter, including the fact that, ‘unlike the French Third Worldists, most of Fanon’s American readers appeared not to have noticed that *Les Damnés de la terre* is, at least in part, a book about Algeria and not America,’<sup>128</sup> prompting Macey to comment that, ‘the self-identification of civil rights workers, black power activists and Québécois separatists with Fanon’s wretched of the earth necessarily involves the misrecognition of exaggeration.’<sup>129</sup>

Through a close analysis of specific extracts of both *Peau noire, masques blancs* and *Les Damnés de la terre* and their translations, this chapter seeks to examine the impact that culturally and temporally rooted translations have on the Anglophone perceptions of both the source language author and text. I will also explore how the manipulation of the source text language in translation affects both the identity of the text in the target language and that of the target language reader.

### **An application of a binary model of translation theory**

Before beginning an examination of key translation theory, and an analysis of the translations using the theoretical framework I shall put forward, it is important to understand the socio-cultural and economic framework in which a translation is produced. The assertion has frequently been made that the style a translation adheres to is influenced, principally, by the expectations (norms) of the target language readership, causing an asymmetrical balance of power, favouring the

---

<sup>128</sup> Macey, *Frantz Fanon*, p. 24.

<sup>129</sup> *Ibid.* p. 25.

demands of the target language readership. Furthermore, it is necessary to remain aware of the fact that although the translation remains in a theoretically strong position in comparison to the source language text, it is still judged according to prevailing target culture normative values, rather than those contemporary at the time of writing. Consequentially, the translation therefore becomes a product and a commodity, which must be marketed appropriately and appealingly, and, indeed, ‘the norms may be formulated in precise terms by a client or institution who commissions a translation so as to produce a particular effect for a particular audience.’<sup>130</sup> Michaela Wolf emphasizes the importance of the role of ideology in translation due to the fact that both source and target language texts are,

[...] rooted in cultural history and are both products of social forces. The reception of this product is now essential: the less ambiguous a translated text is, the more readable it is, and consequently the more “consumable” on the book market.<sup>131</sup>

Thus, an assessment of the degree to which the marketability of the text affects the choices made in translation and the way in which the text is presented in the target language culture is vital, because, as Venuti warns, ‘[t]he viability of a translation is established by its relationship to the cultural and social conditions under which it is produced and read.’<sup>132</sup> Indeed, the increasing dominance of Anglo-American influence in both translational and reading habits, more generally, cannot be underestimated.

---

<sup>130</sup> Lawrence Venuti, *Translation Changes Everything* (London and New York: Routledge, 2013), p. 99.

<sup>131</sup> Michaela Wolf, ‘Translation as a Process of Power: Aspects of Cultural Anthropology in Translation’, in *Translation as Intercultural Communication: Selected Papers from the EST Congress – Prague 1995*, ed. by Mary Snell-Hornby, Zuzana Jettmarová and Klaus Kaindl (Amsterdam and Philadelphia: John Benjamins, 1995), pp. 123-134 (p. 129).

<sup>132</sup> Lawrence Venuti, *The Translator’s Invisibility: A History of Translation* (London and New York: Routledge, 1995), p. 18.

Of consideration is the fact that one of these texts is a re-translation. Following Markmann's work of 1967, Philcox's much later translation of 2008 is a clear refocusing of the main themes of the text (as will later be discussed). The re-translation presents some unique challenges of its own in the analysis, for,

the retranslator is likely to be aware, [...], not only of the competing interpretations inscribed in the source text by a previous version and by the retranslation, but also of the linguistic and cultural norms that give rise to these interpretations, such as literary canons and dominant discursive strategies.<sup>133</sup>

One of the most demanding issues in the translation of *Peau noire, masques blancs* (and, indeed, *Les Damnés de la terre*, too as Philcox speaks about this issue in the translator's note to *The Wretched of the Earth* in 2004) is the question of how to translate Fanon's use of 'nègre' and the derivatives of this word which appear in the text. By studying examples from the texts and their translations we can begin to appreciate the cultural and contemporary influences on translations and the effects this has on our understanding of both the text and the author.

### **Theoretical Application in Textual Analysis**

Here, I shall briefly touch upon a number of theories which will initially support the comparison of translations of *Peau noire, masques blancs* (1952) by Charles Lam Markmann (1967) and Richard Philcox (2008) and lead to a further, nuanced discussion of the influence of translation in an understanding of postcolonial identity through a close textual analysis of key excerpts from *Peau noire, masques blancs*. Our study of the effects of translation upon the Anglophone conception of a postcolonial identity will begin with an examination

---

<sup>133</sup> Venuti, *Translation Changes Everything*, p. 100.

of a key translation theory developed by Lawrence Venuti referring to the translator's invisibility, which is closely bound up with his further development of Schleiermacher's theory of domesticating and foreignizing styles of translation. He describes 'invisibility' thus,

[referring] to two mutually determining phenomena: one is an illusionistic effect of discourse, of the translator's own manipulation of English, the other is the practice of reading and evaluating translations that has long prevailed in the United Kingdom and the United States, among other cultures, both English and foreign language.<sup>134</sup>

One of the most important, and widely recognizable characteristics of this theory is that,

a translated text, whether prose or poetry, fiction or nonfiction, is judged acceptable by most publishers, reviewers, and readers when it reads fluently, when the absence of any linguistic or stylistic peculiarities makes it seem transparent, giving the appearance that it reflects the foreign writer's personality or intention or the essential meaning of the foreign language text – the appearance in other words, that the translation is not in fact a translation, but the "original".<sup>135</sup>

Venuti does not necessarily condone this translation practice, as he recognizes that often for a text to prove its commercial worth, it must read 'fluently', and further, he acknowledges that, 'Anglo-American culture, [...], has long been dominated by domesticating theories that recommend fluent translating.'<sup>136</sup> Venuti himself advocates a 'foreignizing' style of translation (following Schleiermacher), which aims to, 'develop a theory and practice of translation that resists dominant target-language cultural values so as to signify the linguistic and cultural difference of the foreign text.'<sup>137</sup> Yet, whilst these terms provide a broad picture of the translation style, the extent to which the translator remains 'invisible' in either approach remains unclear (as we shall see in later analysis of the text), meaning that the effects these styles might have upon the intended

---

<sup>134</sup> Venuti, *The Translator's Invisibility*, p. 1.

<sup>135</sup> Ibid.

<sup>136</sup> Ibid. p. 21.

<sup>137</sup> Ibid. pp. 23-24.

readership, or on the perception of the source author's identity also remain unknown.

Furthermore, if we compare Venuti's examination of domesticating and foreignizing styles of translation, we see a parallel between this opposing pair of translation types and those put forward by Gideon Toury in the study of translational norms.<sup>138</sup> Whilst Venuti developed Schleiermacher's theory that, 'either the translator leaves the writer alone as much as possible and moves the reader towards the writer, or he leaves the reader alone as much as possible and moves the writer towards the reader',<sup>139</sup> to discuss not only the rationale behind such translational choices but also how such choices are affected in authentic examples, Toury goes further than a simple explanation and application of the theory by giving depth to the binary formation of domesticating/foreignizing translation approaches. His discussion of adequate versus acceptable translations resonates here, because a similar line of argumentation is followed in the tension between the demands of both source and target language texts in terms of their representation in translation. This is exemplified through his study of normative influence in different translational situations, in stating that, 'whereas adherence to source norms determines a translation's *adequacy* as compared to the source text, subscription to norms originating in the target culture determines its

---

<sup>138</sup> See Gideon Toury's theory of Descriptive Translation Studies for a fuller discussion of the development of the use of translational norms. Gideon Toury, *In Search of a Theory of Translation* (Tel Aviv: The Porter Institute for Poetics and Semantics, 1980) and Gideon Toury, *Descriptive Translation Studies and Beyond* (Amsterdam and Philadelphia: John Benjamins, 1995).

<sup>139</sup> Friedrich Schleiermacher, 'On the Different Methods of Translating', trans. Waltraud Bartscht, in *Theories of Translation: An Anthology of Essays from Dryden to Derrida* ed. by Rainer Schulte and John Biguenet (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1992), pp. 36-54 (p. 42).

*acceptability*.’<sup>140</sup> The emphasis on the influence of the socio-culturally informed norms on the manner in which a translation is completed is crucial for our study of Fanon’s texts, and Toury’s theory of translational norms in conjunction with adequate/acceptable translations allows us to move beyond the binary terminology of ‘domesticating’ and ‘foreignizing’ translations, offering a more meaningful study of the work in terms of the socio-cultural influences determining the nature of the translation and an opportunity to shade the degree to which the translator remains ‘visible’ in the text.

To begin looking more closely at the translations themselves, broadly speaking, the 1967 translation can be said to take a more domesticating approach (in Venuti’s terms), adhering to the demands of the target language audience (and norms) and producing an ‘acceptable’ style of text for the target readership (for Toury). However, the later 2008 translation is approached in such a way as to ‘foreignize’ the text (loosely) for the target language readership, and certainly pays greater attention to the nuances of the source text in translation, resulting in what Toury would see as an ‘adequate’ translation. Yet, although Toury’s theory combines normative influence with translational categorization in his work, fundamentally, both theorists’ conceptions of the organization of translation theory maintain an adherence to a relatively strict binary image of the possibilities in translation – either a work is domesticating/acceptable or foreignizing/adequate. Although these descriptions accept the fact that socio-cultural norms influence the construction of the translated text – to varying degrees – there is still a negation of the notion that there may be (and indeed, is

---

<sup>140</sup> Toury, *Descriptive Translation Studies and Beyond*, pp. 56-57 (my emphasis).

likely to be) an element of cross-cultural discourse in the text, with elements from both the source and target language cultures emerging in the target language work.

To illuminate this argument concerning the role of binary values in translation, we turn to a well-known scene in *Peau noire, masques blancs* in which the black man is faced with a child terrified by his physical presence, and his mother, who is desperately trying to pacify the child. Markmann's translation of the mother's exclamation, 'Chut! Il va se fâcher!'<sup>141</sup> as, '[h]ell, he's getting mad [...]'<sup>142</sup> places the tone of the text firmly in the vernacular of the American South and this colloquial tone is replicated with the translation of, 'j'ai eu un *camarade* sénégalais au régiment [...]'<sup>143</sup> as, 'I had a Senegalese *buddy* in the army [...]'<sup>144</sup> Although stepping away from the clipped tones of the source language text, it allows the translation to appeal in style to the American market for which it was intended. However, through the use of this domesticating style, the text is moved further away from the source language writer, resulting in the disappearance of the polite, yet stern and chiding tone of the mother and the installation of a tone bordering on the comic. The manipulation of the source text into something altogether different in the target language translation is itself extremely problematic, in fact, '[to inscribe] the foreign text with a partial interpretation, partial to English-language values, [to reduce] if not simply [exclude] the very difference that translation is called on to convey.'<sup>145</sup> This is

---

<sup>141</sup> Frantz Fanon, *Peau noire, masques blancs* (Paris: Editions du Seuil, 1952), p. 89.

<sup>142</sup> Frantz Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*, trans. Charles Lam Markmann (New York: Grove Press, 1967), p. 113.

<sup>143</sup> Fanon, *Peau noire, masques blancs*, p. 91 (my emphasis).

<sup>144</sup> Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*, trans. Charles Lam Markmann, p. 113 (my emphasis).

<sup>145</sup> Venuti, *The Translator's Invisibility*, p. 21.

something which, although Venuti might claim it to be an act of ‘invisibility’ on the part of the translator by rendering it such that the translation itself seems to take on the guise of the ‘original’, fundamentally distorts the text, and, I would argue, makes the hand of the translator particularly apparent.

On the other hand, if we consider the Philcox translation of 2008, the phrase is rendered as, ‘[...] you’ll make him angry.’<sup>146</sup> This seemingly straightforward translation is itself noteworthy. Firstly, it is almost a word for word, literal translation, which in many other cases would be considered as a simplistic model of translation, but here is entirely unremarkable and, indeed, correct because it conveys the precise meaning of the source language text. Secondly, it maintains the register of the text to a level more akin to the original text. Thirdly, by adhering closely to the tone and register set in Fanon’s text, the translator achieves a greater degree of accuracy and ‘fluency’ so important in the sales of translated books on the Anglo-American market. This is in contrast with Markmann’s translation, which forcibly removes the mother speaking from the cultural context of the Caribbean, to that of the American South, and is therefore reductive in that it implies that one tone is adequate to deal with both the Caribbean and the American South, in a colloquial, and even patronizing manner.<sup>147</sup>

---

<sup>146</sup> Frantz Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks* trans. Richard Philcox (New York: Grove Press, 2008), p. 93.

<sup>147</sup> See Clarisse Zimra’s brief discussion of this choice in translation in her article ‘Daughters of Mayotte, Sons of Frantz’. Clarisse Zimra, ‘Daughters of Mayotte, Sons of Frantz’ in *An Introduction to Caribbean Francophone Writing: Guadeloupe and Martinique*, ed. by Sam Haigh (Oxford and New York: Berg, 1999), pp. 177-194 (p. 184).



However, despite the fact that the Markmann translation veers away substantially from the intended effect, it still remains culturally relevant – and perhaps more so – for the contemporary target language audience due to the lapse in register, showing the positive effects of domestication on book sales and the negative on the necessity (or desire) to adhere to the source language text. This clearly reiterates the unequal power relationship between source and target language texts and underlines the fact that, '[t]he model of contemporary book publishing is a Western one that was exported alongside Western imperialism.'<sup>148</sup> Indeed, Venuti claims that, as regards the foreignizing translation technique, 'in an effort to do right abroad, this translating method must do wrong at home.'<sup>149</sup> The very same can be said of domesticating practices and their effects on the reader's perceptions of 'abroad'.

In a particular scene in Chapter 5 of *Peau noire, masques blancs* (1952), Fanon describes discussing the 'problème noir' with friends and people he met, including Afro-Americans. He mentions that,

Ensembles nous protestions et affirmions l'égalité des hommes devant le monde. Il y avait aussi aux Antilles ce petit hiatus qui existe entre la békaille, la mulâtraille et la négtraille. Mais nous nous contentions d'une compréhension intellectuelle de ces divergences. En fait, ça n'était pas dramatique.<sup>150</sup>

Here, my focus lies on the phrase 'la békaille, la mulâtraille et la négtraille' because its tone – and its translations – sit uneasily with that of the rest of the excerpt and amply demonstrates the power of the translator in the representation of the source writer in his lexical choices. Fanon's use of the pejorative suffix

---

<sup>148</sup> Audrey Small, 'Publishing, Translation and Truth', in *Intimate Enemies: Translation in Francophone Contexts*, ed. by Kathryn Batchelor and Claire Bisdorff (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2013), pp. 69-86 (p. 70).

<sup>149</sup> Venuti, *The Translator's Invisibility*, p. 20.

<sup>150</sup> Fanon, *Peau noire, masques blancs*, p. 89 (my emphasis).

‘-aille’ hardens the image of the ‘béké’, ‘mulâtre’ and ‘nègre’ – especially that of ‘négraille’, which reflects back his conviction concerning the objectification in which the image of black identity is created by the white colonizers, in opposition to their own. This term is accepted as being exceptionally derogatory and offensive, and previously has been translated as both ‘nigger trash’<sup>151</sup> and ‘nigger rabble.’<sup>152</sup> However, the intensity of this phrase is not realized in either translation.<sup>153</sup> Markmann renders it as, ‘[...] the almost-white [which in itself is a problematic translation of ‘la békaille’], the mulatto, and the nigger’,<sup>154</sup> whilst Philcox presents, ‘[...] white Creoles, Mulattoes, and Blacks.’<sup>155</sup> Understandably, when dealing with such a socially and politically charged word as ‘nègre’, ‘negro’ or ‘nigger’, one is aware of the translator’s need to tread carefully according to an awareness of both the context in which the source text was written and their contemporary culture and social expectations. Philcox himself comments on the difficulties springing from the connotations of this word for the translator, knowing that in creating and following his own translational norms, he sanctions the loss of some of the visceral emotion found

---

<sup>151</sup> See Anne Elizabeth Willey, ‘The Yambo Ouologuem Reader: The Duty of Violence, A Black Ghostwriter’s Letter to France, and the Thousand and One Bibles of Sex (Review)’, *Research in African Literatures*, 40.1 (2009), 190-191 because the previous translation of the text under discussion used the term ‘nigger-trash’ for ‘négraille’.

<sup>152</sup> *Merriam-Webster’s Encyclopedia of Literature* (Springfield, MA: Merriam-Webster, Inc., 1995), p. 845. This proved to be an incorrect source as to the origin of the term ‘négraille’ as it claims that the Malian writer Ouologuem, born in 1940, coined the term as a description of servility. This is likely to be incorrect as it is used by Césaire in the *Cahier d’un retour au pays natal* in 1939. However, the translation the source provides for the word is ‘nigger rabble’ (1971 Manheim translation of *Le Devoir de Violence*) which carries the pejorative tone expected for such a word.

<sup>153</sup> Nor is the pejorative sense of the phrase rendered in the parallel text edition of Aimé Césaire’s *Cahier d’un retour au pays natal* (Newcastle: Bloodaxe Books, 2010) and translated by Mireille Rosello and Annie Pritchard. In this edition, the translators choose to write the phrase, ‘la négraille’ as ‘negridom’, almost elevating it to the same status as Césaire’s theory of Negritude with the use of similar sound patterns and thus according it a positive sense. For example: ‘la négraille aux senteurs d’oignon frit retrouve dans son sang répandu le goût amer de la liberté’/ ‘Negridom with its smell of fried onion rediscovers the sour taste of freedom in its spilt blood’, pp. 130-131.

<sup>154</sup> Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*, trans. Charles Lam Markmann, p. 110.

<sup>155</sup> Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*, trans. Richard Philcox, p. 90.

in Fanon's work. He describes how his translation of the single word 'nègre' in many different forms shows the evolution of contemporary cultural politics and the influence of target culture norms, saying,

I have updated the word *Negro*, when he refers to the peoples of Africa or the diaspora, to *black*, and used *nigger* when it is the colonizer referring to the same. In some cases, I have left *Negro* in its historical context. But I have lost something in the translation of the word nègre, for it has both a sting and an embrace, and that is irretrievable.<sup>156</sup>

Whilst translating 'négraille' as something akin to 'nigger trash' would undoubtedly be more troubling for a contemporary Anglo-American reader than the translations we see here, it would nevertheless be a traditionally more 'faithful' rendering of the word, which portrays more accurately Fanon's intended 'sting' lost by Philcox. For the target readership the translations we are presented with now are an open intervention on the source language text, overlaying it with target language norms and preventing the reader from fully grasping the complete meaning of the text by creating an 'acceptable', rather than 'adequate', style of translation. It renders the translator's work entirely visible (showing the difficulty the translator has in remaining in any way consistently 'invisible' in his work), by privileging the position of the cultural norms of the target language over those of the source language, drawing on Toury's controversial theory that 'good' translation relies on the target language, and indeed, 'is a fact of whatever target sector it is found to be a fact of, i.e., that (sub)system which proves to be best equipped to account for it: function, product and underlying process.'<sup>157</sup>

---

<sup>156</sup> Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, trans. Richard Philcox (New York: Grove Press, 2004) p. 248.

Although this Translator's Note refers specifically to the translation choices made for his work in 2004 on *The Wretched of the Earth*, it can be assumed that Philcox's practices remain the same for his 2008 translation of *Black Skin, White Masks*, as the style remains similar to his earlier Fanon translation.

<sup>157</sup> Toury, *Descriptive Translation Studies and Beyond*, p. 29.

In this case, Markmann is rather closer to the mark than Philcox with his use of ‘niggers’, and provides a translation that, although it makes it clear for the reader the tone of the phrase, is not entirely a domestication of the source text. It conveys – but perhaps to a lesser degree than the source language word – the appropriate tone of contempt that is apparent in ‘négraille’. However, I would argue that the ‘sting’ delivered in this use of ‘niggers’ as a translation is dampened due to Markmann’s seemingly haphazard choices of ‘Negro’ or ‘nigger’ elsewhere in his text, with ‘nigger’ being used in situations that could be construed as both negative and not, giving the reader at times a somewhat confused picture of both his and Fanon’s meanings. Philcox, on the other hand, entirely negates this complex translational problem by rendering ‘négraille’ with the much more neutral term ‘Blacks’. Clearly influenced by the Anglo-American cultural norms presiding in 2004 (when he translated *Les Damnés de la terre* and set out his own translation system) and 2008, this term in no way provides a true measure of the intensity of the source language word, giving a strong example of a situation in which the target language cultural norms prevail over the sense prescribed by the source language writer. Is it really that the translators prefer simply to dull the meaning of the text in order to avoid difficult conversations about potentially contentious lexical choices?

Considering the canonical status of the 1967 Markmann translation, it is therefore clear that the *acceptable* translations, which bring the experience of the text closer to that of the reader, are indeed precisely that – acceptable – for the target language readership and are frequently thought of on equal footing as the

source language text itself<sup>158</sup> or even superseding it in terms of use in the development of Anglo-American critical theory (Postcolonial Studies in particular). Yet, because of and in spite of this, traditions and problems often remain examined in terms of a binary appreciation of translation systems, which leads to the maintenance of target culture norms and the privileging of ‘acceptable’ styles in translation. Undoubtedly, Markmann’s domestication and Americanization of the text led to a wide readership in the target area, but it was a wide readership sharing a miscommunicated message from a misunderstood text. Philcox, on the other hand, saw his task as one of ‘[retrieving] his [Fanon’s] lost voice’,<sup>159</sup> and, at the same time, retrieving a sense of the foreign which was erased with the likes of the ‘sho’ good eatin’ references in the 1967 text. Whilst helpful in defining translational systems and loose indications of translational style, I would like to argue that it is now time to step beyond these binary terms in our translation studies and toward a use of Pym’s cohesive model of intercultural translation.

### **Towards a model of intercultural translation in further examinations of *Peau noire, masques blancs***

In this examination of the translations of *Peau noire, masques blancs*, we have thus far focused on a commonly accepted approach to translation analysis. That is, we have situated the discussion of the translated texts in a framework based on a binary appreciation of translation theory (domestication/foreignization or

---

<sup>158</sup> This is exemplified in the manner in which Fanon’s texts have entered the canon of postcolonial, psychiatric and philosophical theory in Anglophone university departments.

<sup>159</sup> Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, trans. Richard Philcox, p. 246.

adequate/acceptable) and the assumption that the study of the texts usually takes place in a linear fashion (starting with the source text, to which translation one is compared, and translation two can then be compared to both the source text and translation one). Whilst this is undoubtedly a fruitful way to initially note similarities and differences in terms of lexical and grammatical choices; to make a detailed comparison of the translations and the translations to the source text; and to allow a depth of understanding when it comes to these micro elements of the translations, it is also easy when using this method to negate the cross-textual and cross-cultural elements present in translations. Therefore, the second section of the chapter aims to challenge this system and to suggest another model of analysis, providing a productive way of examining the macro details of translations alongside the micro (i.e: the effect of the choice of individual words in the overall tone and register of the translation). This second model of analysis is based on theories put forward by Pym (the theory of intercultural translation) and Glissant (the theory of Relation). The use of this combination of theories aims to complement the linear system previously implemented and will consider not just the translation and its relationship to the source text, but also other translations and factors influencing the work, including the impact of the socio-cultural context in which the translator is working.

### **The application of Pym's Model of Intercultural Translation to the translations**

Anthony Pym's work seeks to dismantle the belief that translation must aim for direct equivalence between source text and target language translation in order for the work to be both fluent and well-received amongst the target readership.

He sees the search for equivalence as, '[...] not a predetermined relation that translators passively seek, but instead works as a transitory fiction that translators produce in order to have receivers somehow believe that translations have not really been translated.'<sup>160</sup> For Pym, equivalence is to be found rather in the value of the work, not in specific word meanings. In order to translate purposefully, it is necessary to firstly recognize that translation includes fictions of equivalence (for the reason that, 'translational fictions of equivalence remain essential for the maintenance of countless acts of intercultural communication.'<sup>161</sup>) and that it is a temporary creation, which is likely to be superseded by other translations in future. Secondly, Pym says that we must now move toward a theory of interculturality, notable for its emphasis on both the source and target language cultures in translation.

The theory of intercultural translations refers to 'beliefs and practices found in intersections or overlaps of cultures, where people combine something of two or more cultures at once'<sup>162</sup> allows for the source culture to overlap with that of the target language, and it is the space that is created between the two cultures in which translation takes place. This space can be viewed as one of productivity rather than a vacuum, allowing new possibilities in translation to emerge. Batchelor suggests translation in this sense as a process of movement between two places, and this third space of translational newness to be found between the two cultures is therefore one of spatial and temporal movement.<sup>163</sup> She goes on

---

<sup>160</sup> Anthony Pym, *Translation and Text Transfer: An Essay on the Principles of Intercultural Communication* (Frankfurt am Main & Berlin: Peter Lang, 1992), p. 38.

<sup>161</sup> Pym, *Translation and Text Transfer*, p. 49.

<sup>162</sup> Anthony Pym, *Method in Translation History* (Manchester: St. Jerome, 1998), p. 177.

<sup>163</sup> See Kathryn Batchelor, *Decolonizing Translation: Francophone African Novels in English Translation* (Manchester: St. Jerome, 2012), pp. 250-251.

to point out that, in this theory - which will form the foundation of the following textual analysis - 'the translator is not outside the influence of his or her own culture, but is still bound up within it; the translator's awareness of the source culture renders the context in which he or she operates more complex, rather than less; the image is thus not one of emptiness but of complexity and conflict, which is surely more apt to the translation task.'<sup>164</sup> Therefore, in the context of the translations of *Peau noire, masques blancs*, each translation should be considered in conjunction with the source text and the cultural context in which it is translated. Any future retranslations should also consider past translations as part of their own cultural context, as Pym reminds us that, 'rather than decide whether a translation is progressive for us here and now, properly historical criticism must determine the value of a past translator's work in relation to the effects achieved in the past.'<sup>165</sup> Yet, Venuti also warns us of the pitfalls of mistakenly overlaying contemporary cultural readings on outdated translations (and vice versa) saying that, 'not only can't we read a recently translated novel with a sense of how the source text draws on the source-culture traditions where it emerged, but uneven translation patterns can all too easily harden into misleading cultural stereotypes.'<sup>166</sup>

In the following section of the chapter, I will use Pym's theory of intercultural translation as a means through which to examine the influences of past translations and the cultural contexts of the source and target language cultures on translation. This discussion will focus on broadening out an examination of

---

<sup>164</sup> Batchelor, *Decolonizing Translation*, p. 249.

<sup>165</sup> Pym, *Method in Translation History*, p. 5.

<sup>166</sup> Venuti, *Translation Changes Everything*, p. 113.



the use and translation of the word ‘nègre’ in *Peau noire, masques blancs* and its translations (focusing on that of Philcox) in order to illustrate the importance of the cultural context of translations. Intercultural translation demands that the translator – and the reader – work within the space created by the overlap between the needs of the source and target language cultures and this method is clearly demonstrated in Philcox’s 2008 work.

In the translator’s note to *The Wretched of the Earth*, Philcox speaks of the challenges inherent in translating ‘nègre’ which he says would have been used in several ways by Fanon, ‘whether referring to the black man in general or putting it in the mouth of the oppressor as an insult.’<sup>167</sup> The various ways in which he chooses to translate this single word, so that, ‘when he refers to the peoples of Africa or the diaspora, [I changed *Negro*] to *black*, and used *nigger* when it is the colonizer referring to the same. In some cases, I have left *Negro* in its historical context.’<sup>168</sup> The fact that Philcox sees it as necessary and appropriate to translate ‘nègre’ with three different versions, depending on the context in which the word is used, and by whom, shows a cultural sensitivity to both the source culture in trying to accurately render the different connotations of each use of ‘nègre’ and an attempt to adhere to current expectations of how the word is used in a modern Anglophone cultural context.

These choices in translation can be demonstrated with the following examples. Firstly, in the source text, Fanon describes himself – and other Black people – thus, ‘ma misère de mauvais nègre, mes dents de mauvais nègre, ma faim de

---

<sup>167</sup> Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, trans. Richard Philcox, p. 247.

<sup>168</sup> Ibid. (emphasis in original).

mauvais nègre [...]’<sup>169</sup> which Philcox renders as, ‘[...] the wretched nigger, it is not with my nigger’s teeth, it is not as the hungry nigger [...].’<sup>170</sup> In using ‘nigger’ in this context, Philcox highlights the fact that, although the term can be used by black people ‘[as] a racial term with undertones of warmth and goodwill...[which reflects] a tragicomic sensibility that is aware of black history,’<sup>171</sup> it is only ever an insult from the oppressor. In response to this, ‘it [became] a word rehabilitated by the black intelligentsia of the time [including Fanon] and thrown back at the European as the supreme weapon.’<sup>172</sup>

Secondly, we see Philcox switch his translation of ‘nègre’ within the same phrase: ‘[...] l’expérience nègre est ambiguë, car il n’y a pas *un* nègre, mais *des* nègres.’<sup>173</sup> Philcox translates this sentence as: ‘the black experience is ambiguous, for there is not *one* Negro –there are *many* black men.’<sup>174</sup> The shift from ‘Negro’ to ‘black men’ is interesting because, if we follow Philcox’s own translation strategy, it shows a desire for a change in perception of Black people. He takes us from ‘*one* Negro’ (which he uses in a historical sense) to ‘*many* black men’, suggesting the movement through history of the position of black men in Martinique from slave to citizen, and again employs Pym’s model of equivalence based on meaning not literal translation. However, despite this text being one which is carefully translated and nuanced, these changes in translation are only based on what Philcox believes should be done, rather than what is lexical fact. The fact that ‘nègre’ can be translated in several different ways and

---

<sup>169</sup> Fanon, *Peau noire, masques blancs*, p. 109.

<sup>170</sup> Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*, trans. Richard Philcox, p. 113.

<sup>171</sup> Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, trans. Richard Philcox, p. 247.

<sup>172</sup> Ibid. pp. 247-248.

<sup>173</sup> Fanon, *Peau noire, masques blancs*, p. 110 (emphasis in original).

<sup>174</sup> Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*, trans. Richard Philcox, p. 115 (emphasis in original).

thus allows for this lexical development permits Philcox's choices, but it is hard to know if his translations would have been precisely what Fanon would have intended. Nevertheless, it helps Philcox cross the cultural and temporal divide and provide a translation in the third space, which adheres to both sets of cultural norms – contemporary to both us, and Fanon. His search for the most accurate cultural meaning brings a more nuanced reading to the text rather than merely translating it as 'negro' and produces an effect of symmetry of meaning (rather than direct equivalence) between the source and translated texts.

### **The Application of Glissant's Theory of Relation to the translations**

Initially, Édouard Glissant's theory of Relation deals predominantly with identity and the interconnectedness of people. It develops Deleuze and Guattari's notion to suggest that that everything and everyone is rhizomatically linked; that is, there is a rootedness in and to all beings, but rather than being a 'racine unique' it is 'le rhizome' which 's'étend à la rencontre d'autres racines.'<sup>175</sup> This image of the root stretching out, rather than down,<sup>176</sup> 'in which all growth is structured from a single central point, the rhizome, which is indistinguishably both root and stem, proliferates randomly from many different nodes at once'<sup>177</sup> and making connections with other roots, recalls the relationship between – amongst other things – languages and translations, and the development of languages

---

<sup>175</sup> Édouard Glissant, *Introduction à une poétique du divers* (Paris: Gallimard, 1996), p. 59.

<sup>176</sup> For, if the root were 'unique' in that it grew downwards rather than encountering others when growing outwards, this action recalls exclusion and exclusivity, 'c'est la racine unique qui exclut l'autre comme participant' (Glissant, 1996: 62-63) and ultimately, the behaviour of a colonial society when wanting to underscore the Otherness of those who do not "belong" in the community, 'la notion d'identité se réalise autour des trames de la Relation qui comprend l'autre comme inférant' (Glissant, 1996: 63).

<sup>177</sup> Celia M. Britton, *Édouard Glissant and Postcolonial Theory: Strategies of Language and Resistance* (Charlottesville and London: University Press of Virginia, 1999), p. 14.

themselves. Indeed, ‘the way the languages interpenetrate in a specific act of translation actualizes the network of unpredictable ties that every single language has to every other language in cultural, geographic, and affective terms.’<sup>178</sup> It also underscores the possibility for an understanding of a totality based on diversity rather than unity, which seems particularly apt when building a model of translation analysis for a set of translations such as those of *Peau noire, masques blancs*. Moreover, Glissant underscores the importance of the links, not just between source text and translation but also the languages themselves. Arguably, this can logically be extended to multiple translations made of the source texts, because although completed in the same language and differing emphases exist in translation according to the cultural context and the demands of the publisher and readership, there is still the process of exchange, understanding and reciprocity (to an extent) at play. Indeed, Glissant describes the space that translation inhabits as not just ‘le champ des langues’ but, ‘le champ du rapport des langues. Le champ de la relation des langues.’<sup>179</sup>

Furthermore, the theory of Relation will be used as a foundation of this translation methodology because its basis is, ‘the irreducible difference of the Other; [...] is in the first place a relation of equality with and respect for the Other as *different* from oneself.’<sup>180</sup> Relation is therefore useful in the context of translation analysis because it requires us move beyond the simple acceptance of the fact that there is always an element of difference in translation in order to

---

<sup>178</sup> Max Hantel, ‘Rhizomes and the Space of Translation: on Édouard Glissant’s Spiral Retelling’ *Small Axe*, 42 (2013), 100-113 (p. 108).

<sup>179</sup> Luigia Pattano, ‘Traduire la relation des langues: un entretien avec Édouard Glissant’ <http://mondesfrancophones.com/dossiers/edouard-glissant/traduire-la-relation-des-langues-un-entretien-avec-edouard-glissant/> paragraph 3, (accessed. 27.11.13).

<sup>180</sup> Britton, *Édouard Glissant and Postcolonial Theory*, p. 11.

examine the translations from all aspects. This concept of relation (in its fullest sense, relating to Glissant's other theories of 'totalité-monde'<sup>181</sup> and 'la créolisation') can be applied to this model of translation analysis I propose for the following reasons. Rather than approaching an analysis of a translation with the aim of solely comparing and contrasting (either with each other and/or with the source text) and doing so from a position which adheres to a binary, linear understanding of the texts, it encourages a further holistic viewing, and consequently a deeper understanding of all translations in relation to each other and the source text. Therefore, when the translator takes into account the source language culture and norms, and those of any other previous translations, it allows his work to be a model of intercultural translation.

Philcox's description of his 2008 translation of *Peau noire, masques blancs* as being a way to 'retrieve Fanon's own voice', raises several issues concerning what he understands to be the loss of Fanon's voice in Markmann's 1967 translation, how he might redress the balance and why he feels this is necessary. In the translator's note to his 2004 translation of *The Wretched of the Earth*, Philcox states the following:

I now had to develop a strategy for my own translation. I had a choice of keeping the rather heavy, pompous style and language of the 1950s or deciding to update and modernize it without losing Fanon's voice. I had in mind a young reader who would be swept along by Fanon's thoughts in the language of the twenty-first century. Without betraying Fanon I decided to tighten up the text, update the vocabulary, and retrieve his lost voice.<sup>182</sup>

---

<sup>181</sup> The theory of 'totalité-monde' is relevant here due to the emphasis on the interconnectedness of both people and ideas, and the fact that it is based on the need to 'établir relation et non pas consacrer exclusion' (Glissant, 1996: 67) which is precisely the aim of the approach of this model of translation analysis.

<sup>182</sup> Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, trans. Richard Philcox, p. 246.

These aspects of translation will be examined using an application of Glissant's theory of Relation.

Firstly, this statement precludes the fact that Philcox felt that in the 1967 translation and the admittance of this text into the canonical works of Postcolonial Studies lost the essence of Fanon's thought and philosophical ideologies. Part of this may come from the fact that much of the philosophical theme running through the text is muted in the Markmann translation (as previously discussed) thus dulling the frequently intended tone of scepticism and sarcasm when dealing with such issues as Negritude<sup>183</sup> and Fanon's view of Sartre's work in, 'l'intellectualisation de l'*exister* noir'<sup>184</sup> when, in fact, 'Jean-Paul Sartre [in *Orphée Noir*] a détruit l'enthousiasme noir.'<sup>185</sup> Yet, perhaps somewhat ironically in this case, much of the philosopher's earlier work heavily influenced Fanon's thinking and it is the use of Sartrean terminology which helps to evidence this influence in *Peau noire, masques blancs*. In putting into practice, then, the theory of Relation, and the fact that, 'le langage du traducteur opère comme la créolisation et comme la Relation dans le monde, [...]',<sup>186</sup> we can see how both translations conform to 'Relation' by foregrounding different aspects of the source language. Markmann's text may initially seem like a simplification of Fanon's original text, which leaned substantially on psychiatric and philosophical theories, and the apparent decision to avoid these themes in

---

<sup>183</sup> In particular, with reference to ideas which would stereotypically be classified as belonging to black culture, such as music, rhythm, free expression and a connection to a mystic spirituality, for example, Fanon notes: 'Eia! Le tam-tam baragouine le message cosmique. Seul le nègre est capable de le transmettre, d'en déchiffrer le sens, la portée.' (Fanon, *Peau noire, masques blancs*, p. 100).

<sup>184</sup> Fanon, *Peau noire, masques blancs*, p.108.

<sup>185</sup> Ibid. p. 109.

<sup>186</sup> Glissant, *Introduction à une poétique du divers*, p. 45.

Markmann's work may seem reductive<sup>187</sup> but not entirely accurate. With closer reading, it becomes apparent that Markmann has indeed avoided using the more philosophical terms in instances of direct speech, they are not entirely absent in the text as a whole, such as in his translation of Fanon's description of the Black man's body, and his being in relation to the White man, '[i]n the white world the man of color encounters difficulties in the development of his bodily schema. Consciousness of the body is solely a negating activity. It is a third-person consciousness.'<sup>188</sup> Here, it is clear the link between Sartre and Fanon's thought is clear through the reference to the 'consciousness of the body [as] solely a negating activity,' with these nods to theories of Being in relation to the Other to be found throughout the text. The nuancing of the register throughout Markmann's text recalls the rhizomatic nature of Relation (with shifts between a more traditionally academic register and one which aimed to appeal to, and resonate with, an American audience) – not only is it a translation (corresponding to the roots down into language) but it is also only one interpretation of the same thing, which will not only be modified within the text itself (see different interpretations of 'nègre' between the Markmann and Philcox texts) but will also be translated multiple times in multiple languages (corresponding to the image of roots stretching out).

---

<sup>187</sup> For example, by simply translating, 'enfermé dans cette objectivité écrasante, j'implorai autrui' (Fanon, 1952: 88) as '[s]ealed into that crushing objecthood, I turned beseechingly to others' (Fanon, Markmann, 1967: 109) rather than '[l]ocked in this suffocating reification, I appealed to the Other' (Fanon, Philcox, 2008: 89) Fanon's tone becomes more one of self-pity and need rather than one of philosophical enquiry and resistance, and loses the Sartrean overtones to the beginning of the chapter.

<sup>188</sup> Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*, trans. Charles Lam Markmann, p. 110. Translation of: 'Dans le monde blanc, l'homme de couleur rencontre des difficultés dans l'élaboration de son schéma corporel. La connaissance du corps est une activité uniquement négatrice. C'est une connaissance en troisième personne.' Fanon, *Peau noire, masques blancs*, p. 89.

In considering the question of how Philcox might go about redressing the balance between the two translations and the source text, and why this is deemed necessary in his attempt to retrieve Fanon's 'voice', it is important to recall that Philcox's audience for the 2008 translation of *Black Skin, White Masks* was very different to that of Markmann's in 1967. His audience was no longer one made up of civil rights activists and anti-colonialists, or of colonized people who wanted to have their voices heard, but one which was of a predominately scholarly basis and which was made up of people who sought to use the work within the confines of the mostly Anglophone sphere of Postcolonial Studies. In this case, the emphasis on Sartrean elements in the text has a greater importance here. Although Markmann does not entirely negate the Sartrean tone present in the chapter, it is often not explicit and one would often be led to think that the Self/Other dialectic which is central to Fanon's thesis in 'L'expérience vécue du Noir' is merely a question of the Black man questioning his relationship with and place in society alongside the white man. Nowhere is this crucial dialectic of identity highlighted as clearly as in the following example, which highlights Philcox's return to the phenomenological influences upon Fanon's work, '[p]uisque *l'autre hésitait* à me reconnaître, il ne restait qu'une solution: me faire connaître'<sup>189</sup>, translated as, '[s]ince the *other hesitated* to recognize me, there remained only one solution: to make myself known'<sup>190</sup> and in 2008, '[s]ince the *Other was reluctant* to recognize me, there was only one answer: to make myself known.'<sup>191</sup>

---

<sup>189</sup> Fanon, *Peau noire, masques blancs*, p. 93 (my emphasis).

<sup>190</sup> Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*, trans. Charles Lam Markmann, p. 115 (my emphasis).

<sup>191</sup> Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*, trans. Richard Philcox, p. 95 (my emphasis).



It is also necessary to undertake an examination of the development of the translations of 'chantre' throughout the chapter. This is a word used by Sartre to describe Black musicians and poets,<sup>192</sup> and found in 'Orphée noir' ('c'est le français qui fournira au chantre noir la plus large audience parmi les noirs, au moins dans les limites de la colonisation française'<sup>193</sup>) but one which may have been appropriated in a more sarcastic manner by Fanon in *Peau noire, masques blancs* given his critical stance on Sartre's understanding of what it meant to be Black at that point in history and his attempts to examine the lived experience of the Other whilst still – ironically - Other to the experience himself. Fanon notes that, '[p]as encore blanc, plus tout à fait noir, j'étais un damné. Jean-Paul Sartre a oublié que le nègre souffre dans son corps autrement que le Blanc.'<sup>194</sup> Therefore, bearing in mind the complicated relationship that Fanon has with Sartre as a philosopher and as a supporter of Black rights, it is of interest to note the two translations fulfill both aspects of Fanon's views. Markmann's translations of 'chantre' appear to err on the side of uncontroversial fact, referring to Senghor as 'our singer' (p. 122) and translating Sartre's own use of 'chantre' in a quotation as, 'ardent poets' (p. 133). One could argue that the context of the phrases, and the use of 'ardent' could reveal the underlying sarcastic tone that Fanon is likely to have intended but it seems to be a most straightforward rendering of the two instances of the word. Conversely, Philcox moves beyond this translation method and produces a more verbose translation with a critical tone, using both 'bard' (p. 102) and 'the most ardent of apostles' (p. 112). The Biblical reference to 'apostles', although stepping quite far from the literal meaning of 'chantre',

---

<sup>192</sup> Fanon quotes Sartre as saying, 'les chantres les plus ardents de la négritude sont en même temps des militants marxistes.' Fanon, *Peau noire, masques blancs*, p.107.

<sup>193</sup> Sartre, 'Orphée noir', p. xviii.

<sup>194</sup> Fanon, *Peau noire, masques blancs*, p. 112.

mockingly elevates the role of the Black poets and writers in the eyes of Sartre. This movement and development in meaning and connotation of one word in two translations underscores the possibility of ‘ouverture et partage’ in translation and Relation, as examined below, and, at the same time recalls Glissant’s assertion that translation is also an art of flight. He suggests that,

[...] [a]rt de fugue d’une langue à l’autre, sans que la première s’efface et sans que la seconde renonce à se présenter. Mais aussi art de la fugue parce que chaque traduction aujourd’hui accompagne le réseau de toutes les traductions possibles de toute langue en toute langue.<sup>195</sup>

In this regard, Philcox’s ability to look both back at the source text and the first translation and forward to the type of translation which he himself wishes to produce, whilst allowing elements of the two preceding texts to shine through in his own (his attempt to adhere to what he considers to be the ‘right’ tone for Fanon’s writings and his distancing from certain aspects of the Markmann translation) shows not only the rhizomatic connections of translation practices and developments, and therefore the possibilities inherent in the multilingual interpretations of a single text, but also recalls the clustered archipelagic structure of the Caribbean itself in the structure of thought surrounding these translations. Indeed, as Glissant states in *Traité du tout-monde, Poétique IV*,

[...] voyons que la plupart des îles du monde font archipel avec d’autres. Les îles de la Caraïbe sont de celles-là. Toute pensée archipélique est pensée du tremblement, de la non-présomption, mais aussi de l’ouverture et de partage.<sup>196</sup>

Dash describes Glissant’s concept of the archipelago as, ‘attempting to grasp the full force of the Caribbean’s “irruption into modernity” in envisaging a global extension of the Caribbean’s exemplary experience. Archipelization, therefore,

---

<sup>195</sup> Glissant, *Introduction à une poétique du divers*, p. 46.

<sup>196</sup> Édouard Glissant, *Traité du tout-monde, Poétique IV* (Paris: Gallimard, 1997), p. 231 (my emphasis).

becomes a model for envisioning an ideal relationality between freed opacities.<sup>197</sup> Here, the image of the Caribbean archipelago links well to one of translation, in that one can move around islands and translations in both a linear and an unstructured way, allowing movement up close and further away, and in and around the island or text. It also gives at once a dual image of the islands and translation, concentrating on the micro details (the island or the text) and the macro (the archipelago as a whole and the position of the islands in spatial relation to one another and the temporal relation and interconnection of the translations with each other and the source text). Furthermore, the phrase ‘l’ouverture et [...] partage’ echoes the interactions necessary in the translation process.

## Conclusion

While Venuti and Toury’s translation theories (domestication/foreignization and adequate/acceptable) deal with the identity of the text, they also do so from the perspective of the receiving target language audience with the dualism between Self and Other ultimately playing to the strengths of the Self, rather than the source language Other. By privileging the target language position, these translation strategies underestimate the importance of the source language culture in the relationship between translation and source language text. Therefore, understanding - and crucially - integrating, a cultural understanding of the source language context into the translation is of prime importance, given the central role that culture plays in language development and use in general. Pym’s work

---

<sup>197</sup> J. Michael Dash, ‘Postcolonial Caribbean Identities’, in *The Cambridge History of African and Caribbean Literature*, Vol. 2, ed. by F. Abiola Irele and Simon Gikandi (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), pp. 785 - 796 (p. 794).

on intercultural translation allows the translation to reference both the text's origin and destination cultures, which promotes a clearer understanding that the translation comes from elsewhere, yet speaks to the target language culture, rather than being consumed by it.

This points toward the need for translators to look both back at the source text and forward to the receiving culture encourages us to examine translation in a non-linear and rhizomatic fashion. Bringing in an awareness that all languages and cultures are linked, on both a local and global scale, allows for greater scope when thinking about the development of language and how the translations relate to both the source text and the place of origin. As shall be demonstrated later in this chapter, and in Chapter 3, translations function more coherently when predicated on cultural dialogue, rather than solely on the search for linguistic equivalence.

## Section 2: An examination of the different approaches at work in translations of *Les Damnés de la terre* (1961)

### Introduction

The second of Fanon's texts to be studied here is *Les Damnés de la terre*, published in 1961. *Les Damnés de la terre* stands as the most famous and influential of Fanon's texts, dealing – in part – with the psychological fallout and trauma of the Algerian FLN fighters during the war for independence and framing a broader thesis outlining plans for decolonization. Its revolutionary message has been adopted by struggles and organizations worldwide, including that of the Black Panthers, yet deals with very specific colonial issues, 'ni traité d'économie, ni essai de sociologie voire de politique, cet ouvrage est un appel et même un cri d'alarme sur l'état et le devenir des pays colonisés.'<sup>198</sup> Fanon's physical state is manifest in the driving narrative and urgent tone of this text – he wrote it whilst dying of leukaemia, and clearly demonstrates his need and desire 'faire passer un dernier message'<sup>199</sup> which would be aimed squarely at the disinherited, the dispossessed, the disenfranchised, in short, the wretched of the earth. Furthermore, part of its interest, generally, and particularly in terms of this study of the work and its translation, is the preface, which Fanon requested that Sartre write for the first edition (now accompanied by an additional preface in 2002 by Alice Cherki, and a foreword by Homi K. Bhabha in the 2004 English translation). In terms of an analysis of the reception of *Les Damnés de la terre* in an Anglophone context, an examination of the 1961 Sartre preface is necessary

---

<sup>198</sup> Alice Cherki, 'Préface à l'édition de 2002', in Frantz Fanon, *Les Damnés de la terre* (Paris: Éditions La Découverte, 2011), pp. 421-430 (p. 424).

<sup>199</sup> Ibid.

to frame the discussion within which everything else is understood and in order to properly assess its impact upon both a French and Anglophone reader's perception of Fanon's personal and political ideologies.

This final section of the chapter will take as its starting point an examination of key aspects of the text and its translations by Constance Farrington and Richard Philcox (specifically 'De la violence', as one of the most (in)famous examples of Fanon's anticolonial position). The chapter will then conclude with a study of Sartre's preface – in terms of content and context - and will deal principally with the effect it has on the reception of the text as a whole, amongst both Anglophone and Francophone readers. By studying Fanon's text alongside its application and expansion in Sartre's preface to the text, and using Arendt's *On Violence* to provide a contemporary critique of the work, we can see the degree to which the paratextual influence shifts our understanding and appreciation of both the text and its author.

### **A Consideration of the Translations by Constance Farrington (1968) and Richard Philcox (2004) of *Les Damnés de la terre***

Much like Charles Lam Markmann's translation of *Peau noire, masques blancs*, Constance Farrington's 1963 translation of *Les Damnés de la terre* remained the canonical translation (which included the famous preface from Sartre) until Richard Philcox's new translation of the text was published in 2004. Again, similarly to Markmann's translation, Farrington's work tends to privilege certain aspects of the text over others. This proves problematic, considering the fact that the English translation attracted so much attention and ignited the blaze of

interest in Fanon's ideas – principally on violence – around the Anglophone world.

Unlike Markmann, however, more biographical details concerning Constance Farrington have recently come to light, providing a useful framework of experience from which point we can better consider her translation. Farrington was a graduate in history of Trinity College, Dublin and whilst living in Paris, she came to make the acquaintance of Charles-André Julien (who wrote the 'avant-propos' to Senghor's *Anthologie de la nouvelle poésie nègre et malgache de langue française*), to whom she gave English lessons and because of whom she got the job translating *Les Damnés de la terre* for the English market. Although it is widely thought that she was a member of the British Communist Party<sup>200</sup>, she was not, and had greater links and sympathy with the PCF (although, again, she was not an active member).<sup>201</sup> It is clear therefore, that she moved in politically active circles and it is likely that she would have been very aware of and understood well the socio-political unrest between France and Algeria, its context and the French colonial situation by the time she began her translation.

As discussed in the first section of the chapter, it is crucial to remain mindful of the context in which the translation was written, and the circumstances in which

---

<sup>200</sup> Despite the lack of references for the information he cites, Philcox himself notes in the interview with Celia Britton, '[a]ll I know of her is that she is or was English, and probably Left in her political opinions and sympathetic to the Third World. In fact, she was a member of the British Communist Party. But she seems to have very little knowledge of the cultures she was dealing with [...].' ('*Frantz Fanon: Retrieving A Lost Voice*, A Conversation between Celia Britton and Richard Philcox on the latest translation of Frantz Fanon's *Les Damnés de la terre* (The Wretched of the Earth)', in *Translation Review*, 71 (2006), 3-7, (p. 3)).

<sup>201</sup> See the blog-post 'The Mysterious Constance Farrington' by Kathryn Batchelor for further biographical details, <https://blogs.nottingham.ac.uk/clas/2013/08/06/the-mysterious-constance-farrington/> (accessed 25.02.14).

it was undertaken. Therefore, it seems particularly sharp of a fellow translator to criticize her work as Philcox suggests as, '[raising] the debate on whether it is better to be badly translated than not at all, [because] Farrington's original translation of *Les Damnés de la terre* is seriously flawed.'<sup>202</sup> Problematically, it is these flaws that Philcox sees himself as setting right in his own translation, emphasizing in his translator's note to the work the need he felt to return to Fanon's own 'voice'. He writes, 'I felt that his voice had got distorted and he should be given a second chance to be heard'<sup>203</sup>, and that, '[w]ithout betraying Fanon I decided to tighten up the text, update the vocabulary, and retrieve his lost voice.'<sup>204</sup> He even views himself as resurrecting Fanon's voice, as 'I felt I had to bring a dead translation back to life.'<sup>205</sup>

Whilst it cannot be denied that there are some significant missteps in Farrington's translation, the over-protective way in which Philcox views Fanon's work and other translators' work in relation to it recalls the control of the French *mission civilisatrice*, which sought to bring their colonial societies into line with what the French colonizers thought it should be. Philcox here somewhat replicates this behaviour in his desire to see Fanon be read in the way that *he* feels is right by the 'correct' audience, whilst retaining a register which would, 'update and modernize it without losing Fanon's voice. I had in mind a young reader who would be swept along by Fanon's thoughts in the language of the

---

<sup>202</sup> Britton and Philcox, 'Frantz Fanon: Retrieving a Lost Voice', *Translation Review*, p. 3.

<sup>203</sup> Richard Philcox, 'On Retranslating Fanon, Retrieving a Lost Voice' in Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, trans. Richard Philcox (New York: Grove Press, 2004), p. 245.

<sup>204</sup> Philcox, 'On Retranslating Fanon, Retrieving a Lost Voice', in *The Wretched of the Earth*, p. 246.

<sup>205</sup> Ibid. p. 250.



twenty-first century.’<sup>206</sup> As much as he critiques Farrington’s use of language as being, ‘rather heavy, [and] pompous’,<sup>207</sup> his own attempt to update and modernize the text maybe equally misplaced when it comes to translating a text which was written in 1961, drawing Fanon fully into the realm of twenty-first century Postcolonial Studies – a discipline which did not even exist at the time Fanon was writing, and again (perhaps subconsciously) manipulating Fanon’s words to better fit this particular area of study. Philcox sees the translations as occurring very much in a linear fashion, and his job as not just translating Fanon but also putting right the mistakes that Farrington made before him. His task as regards the retrieval of Fanon’s voice, by both ‘putting to rights’ the previous translation, whilst foregrounding the elements he believes to be integral to the narrative, puts him in a peculiar position as a postcolonial translator.

To begin now to consider some specific examples from the text and its translations, it is worth noting that the patterns of translation that the translators fall into correspond roughly in both *Peau noire, masques blancs* and *Les Damnés de la terre*. That is to say, both Markmann and Farrington appear to favour the communication of the overall sense of the text, in a way most accessible to the target language audience, whilst Philcox’s translations aim to reconstitute the work to its ‘original’ state in terms of its philosophical and psychological influences, yet in terms which render it appealing to a modern audience.

Farrington’s practice seems very much centred on the communicative function of translation, and this can be seen in several ways. She has been criticized by

---

<sup>206</sup> Ibid. p. 246.

<sup>207</sup> Ibid.

Philcox for translating, ‘the West African dress the boubou and Muslim slippers [...] as saris and pampooties’<sup>208</sup> yet this translation, although culturally inaccurate as these names refer more properly to garments from the Indian subcontinent, shows an awareness of the needs of the target language audience. In 1960s England, in particular, readers would have still been aware of the impact of English colonialism in Asia and the contemporary after-effects in terms of the mass migration from the Caribbean and Asian Commonwealth and ex-colonized countries to England at that time. Therefore, the use of phrases such as ‘sari’ or pampooties’ whilst not culturally accurate, still convey for the audience the sense of a different style of dress in a way in which they may be able to imagine for themselves. Likewise, her extensive use of italics and footnoting to describe names and explain situations deserves mention. Footnoting is often frowned upon in translations as disruptive to the flow of the reading experience, and unnecessarily annotating a text that is not the translator’s to alter. Nevertheless, Farrington makes good use of footnotes and this supports the concept of her translation being focused on communication. We see her clarify for the reader that, ‘Fanon is writing in 1961’<sup>209</sup> in a footnote to a discussion of negotiations between France and Algeria, describe ‘*moudjahidines*’ as ‘highly trained soldiers who are completely dedicated to the Moslem cause’<sup>210</sup> and expand on an incomplete quotation Fanon uses but does not reference, noting, ‘refers to Mirabeau’s famous saying: “I am here by the will of the People; I shall leave only by the force of bayonets”’.<sup>211</sup> Whilst this method may seem unusual now – Philcox never clarifies any of the Arabic loan words in italics –

---

<sup>208</sup> Britton and Philcox, ‘Frantz Fanon: Retrieving a Lost Voice’, *Translation Review*, p. 3.

<sup>209</sup> Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, trans. Constance Farrington (London: Penguin, 2001), p. 35.

<sup>210</sup> Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, trans. Constance Farrington, p. 44.

<sup>211</sup> *Ibid.* p. 66.

again, we must see this as a legacy of the time in which Farrington was working. The context of the Franco-Algerian war was probably still fresh in many readers' minds, having ended about a year before the first publication of the translation in 1963 and clarification on Farrington's part gives the reader the links they may need on which to hook their own knowledge. Philcox's translation, however, takes place in a much more globally aware culture and following the American-led War on Terror post 9/11, many people may now already understand such terms as 'mujahideen', and the italicized loan words he does not translate, familiar from recent news reports and contemporary socio-political debates. His work self-describes as the 'retrieval' of Fanon's 'lost' voice, as previously discussed, but at this point, I would like to argue that if Philcox sees Farrington as guilty of obscuring Fanon's meaning, then he too, at times, can also be viewed under similar terms.

However, one small, but important, translation decision by Farrington to be found in the chapter, 'Concerning Violence', contributes not only to obscuring Fanon's intended meaning, but also to the shift in how Fanon was understood, that is, as an advocate of violence to achieve independence from colonialism. This is demonstrated in an example from 'De la Violence'. The source text reads as follows, 'mais il se trouve que pour le peuple colonisé cette violence, parce qu'elle constitue son seul travail, revêt des caractères positifs, formateurs. Cette *praxis violente* est totalisante [...].'<sup>212</sup> Farrington's translation foregrounds the violence in this passage, 'but it so happens that for the colonized people this violence because it constitutes their only work, invests their characters with

---

<sup>212</sup> Frantz Fanon, *Les Damnés de la terre* (Paris: Éditions La Découverte, 2011), p. 495 (my emphasis).

positive and creative qualities. The *practice of violence* binds them together as a whole [...].<sup>213</sup> Finally, in Philcox's translation we see the return of the term 'praxis', 'but it so happens that for the colonized this violence is invested with positive, formative features because it constitutes their only work. This violent praxis is totalizing [...].'<sup>214</sup>

In the source language text, Fanon's use of 'praxis' carries the Marxist definition of an oppressed people, who, possessing a critical understanding of their position under the oppressors (the colonizers), can work together to achieve their liberation. The meaning of this word highlights the deeply social and political importance that Fanon believed decolonization to have, and the use of the adjective 'violente' demonstrates the ferocity of both the abstract and physical struggle for freedom. Yet, despite widespread (false) rumours of Farrington's left-leaning political sympathies and membership of the Communist Party, she does not convey the political engagement of 'praxis' in translation, preferring instead to render it as 'practice'. To be sure, this is what praxis means, but to translate the whole phrase as, 'the practice of violence' and thereby misreading the adjective, 'violente', casts the sentence into a different, altogether more sinister, light; and, it could be argued, contributed to painting a picture of Fanon as a violent terrorist. Furthermore, by translating 'praxis' as 'practice' we lose the important theoretical connection to Sartre's *Critique de la raison dialectique*, which shaped Fanon's thought in *Les Damnés de la terre*, and according to Macey, 'it is that work which supplies the overall framework of his analysis of

---

<sup>213</sup> Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, trans. Constance Farrington, p. 73 (my emphasis).

<sup>214</sup> Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, trans. Richard Philcox, p. 50.

violence in Algeria.’<sup>215</sup> The term ‘practice’ therefore does not carry the full Sartrean meaning of,

a project [that] implies a twofold relationship with an existing state of affairs. On the one hand, a project is negative in that it negates or destroys that which exists; in another sense, it is positive in that it opens on to that which does not exist.<sup>216</sup> [...] The counter-violence of the colonized is a form of praxis, or purposeful human action determined by a project, that responds to and negates the primal and endemic violence of colonization. At the same time, it negates the colonized created by colonization and allows a ‘new man’ to emerge.<sup>217</sup>

Philcox’s translation maintains the philosophical emphasis, and his project to give voice to the ‘true’ Fanon, creating a translation that draws attention to the all encompassing nature of the colonized people’s work, and its social and political urgency, rather than foregrounding the aspect of violence that this might entail.

Throughout the chapter ‘De la Violence’, Fanon refers repeatedly to ‘le colonisé’ – a term which can be translated simply as Farrington has done as ‘the colonized man’. However, Philcox takes this phrase to mean, ‘the colonized subject’. This provokes some investigation, as, on a basic level, ‘subject’ is neutral, and does not carry the connotations of a ‘colonized man’ fighting against the colonizer (again, often assumed in the masculine). Furthermore, the notion of ‘subject’ recalls the Sartrean subject/object dialectic put forward in *Peau noire, masques blancs*, and serves to reinstate, whilst emphasizing, the missing Sartrean influences from the Farrington text in his own translation. Perhaps most crucially of all, the phrase ‘colonized subject’ is part of Postcolonial Studies’ terminology<sup>218</sup> and whilst this might be an innocent inclusion of a term so

---

<sup>215</sup> Macey, *Frantz Fanon*, p. 478.

<sup>216</sup> Jean-Paul Sartre, *Critique de la raison dialectique* (Paris: Gallimard, 1960), p. 64, quoted in Macey, *Frantz Fanon*, p. 478.

<sup>217</sup> Macey, *Frantz Fanon*, p. 478.

<sup>218</sup> Kathryn Batchelor, ‘Fanon: In and Through Translation’ Unpublished Paper at University of Birmingham, (25.02.14)

engrained in the postcolonial consciousness, it might also be a subtle way of underscoring Fanon's position within the postcolonial canon, which might make sense when viewed from our contemporary position, but becomes somewhat confusing when observed from the viewpoint of the original 1961 text, at a time when the notion of the 'subjecthood' of the colonized was still frequently denied.

This is not the only example of Philcox using his own contemporary cultural references to influence or enhance his translation. Despite claiming that he wished to 'update and modernize' the translation, he directly contradicts himself in his interview with Celia Britton saying, 'I believe that modernizing the vocabulary impinges on the understanding of Fanon's ideas and perhaps clarifies some of his ideas.'<sup>219</sup> He illustrates his point using the example, '[...] prépare bien ton coup',<sup>220</sup> which Farrington translates as, 'get ready to attack'<sup>221</sup> and Philcox as, 'get ready to do the right thing.'<sup>222</sup> He suggests that this translation is 'inspired by Spike Lee and more in keeping with the French that says you'd better get it right.'<sup>223</sup> Although this might lend itself to a rhizomatic reading of the translation – in that it is leaning on cultural contexts from both the original and target language cultures, looking both back at where the text came from and forward to where it is destined to travel – this translation seems, when read alongside Fanon's original text, self-conscious and too aware of a context in which the translation would be read, rather than focusing on clarifying the context in which the text originates. It does not seem likely that in attempting to

---

<sup>219</sup> Britton and Philcox, 'Frantz Fanon: Retrieving a Lost Voice', *Translation Review*, p. 4.

<sup>220</sup> Fanon, *Les Damnés de la terre*, p. 464.

<sup>221</sup> Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, trans. Constance Farrington, p. 41.

<sup>222</sup> Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, trans. Richard Philcox, p. 16.

<sup>223</sup> Britton and Philcox, 'Frantz Fanon: Retrieving a Lost Voice', p. 5.

find Fanon's voice of the Algerian anticolonial struggle, Philcox will find it in imitating the American director Spike Lee.

Although Philcox possesses many credentials (maintaining a close connection to the Caribbean, owning sound recordings of Fanon to help him work out the tone of his voice and being an established professional translator), which suggest that he, rather than an amateur Irish historian, might have the ability to capture the sense of Fanon in translation, his focus is too contradictory to fully achieve this aim. As we have seen in the examples I have explored, his translations can easily stray into the realm of pleasing the target language readership over the need to remain true to the text. He does reintroduce the Sartrean terms that Farrington neglects but does so whilst shifting the contextual understanding of the text to a modern, postcolonial Anglophone (and, specifically, American) space. Although Farrington's translations can at times stray far from the French Fanon wrote, the tone of her work more readily seems to capture the urgency and imperfection of Fanon's dictation.

### **The Influence of Paratext in Reading Fanon**

Here, we turn our attention to Sartre's preface to *Les Damnés de la terre*. Although Fanon chose Sartre to author this preface, it is unlikely that he envisaged the extent to which the content of the text would be distorted in the preface, and indeed, we do not know what Fanon thought of the finished article, nor did he not live long enough to see for himself the repercussions of its influence on peoples' perceptions of his thought over the next sixty years. We

also do not know Fanon's reasoning behind his choice of Sartre to produce the preface, apart from his admiration of the philosopher. Previously, authors from Francophone countries wishing to include an allographic preface in their work sometimes chose writers to preface their work who were either metropolitan writers who – because of their name and own cultural capital – would be able to lend an air of authority to their texts, or were themselves Francophone writers who had made the leap to fame within the metropolitan context and could therefore help pave the way for their own authorial success. However, this 'patronage' of Francophone authors by metropolitan writers often had an air of promoting a form of literary colonialism – over-writing the work of the colonized writer with the perceptions and modifications of the preface author, or shaping it to help fit the expectations of a metropolitan readership. This form of patronage, 'attempted to present a colonized writer's work as a combination of aesthetic innovation and political engagement. However, it became increasingly evident as 1962 approached that the work of a colonized writer did not – or *should not* – require the patronage of a Sartre or Gide.'<sup>224</sup> In *Packaging Post/Coloniality*, Watt draws our attention to the irony that the presence of these opening pieces reminds the reader of the history of colonialism whilst the writer attempts to assert him/herself away from these essentialising labels. He believes that the way to avoid reading the text through the optic of a colonial history, is to encourage, 'the metropolitan reader [...], according to these prefaces, [to] consider these texts as the manifestations of *foreign* cultures that are no longer possessed – physically and epistemologically – by the colonizer.'<sup>225</sup> In so doing,

---

<sup>224</sup> Richard Watts, *Packaging Post/Coloniality: The Manufacture of Literary Identity in the Francophone World*, (Oxford: Lexington Books, 2005), p. 88 (emphasis in original).

<sup>225</sup> Ibid. p. 95 (emphasis in original).



the positioning of the text on its own refuses the support offered by the preface, and renders it – and the author of it – without authority. It is the diminishing of Sartre’s authoritative powers in the preface of *Les Damnés de la terre* that Watts foregrounds in his comparative study with the prefatorial authorship of Senghor, yet in this section of the chapter I would like to extend rather more Watts’ argument to suggest that it is not the authoritative presence per se that is diminishing but the need in general for an allographic preface to Fanon’s work. When we consider the effects of Sartre’s preface on the reception of Fanon’s texts, it is clear that Sartre – and his name – wields a considerable amount of power in shaping people’s reading and application of what they have read. Therefore, it is clear that if Sartre did not have any authority over what he wrote, because of the time period in which he wrote it and the person for whom he wrote it, it would not have had such a lasting influence on postcolonial and anticolonial work and study.

Sartre’s preface to *Les Damnés de la terre* (amongst many others) forms part of Genette and Watts’ study of allographic prefaces, yet the position that Sartre takes is clearly divided for each writer. Genette writes of the preface becoming a vehicle for the propagation of Sartre’s own anticolonial beliefs, and a ‘pretext for a manifesto, a confidence, a settling of accounts, a digression [...] Sartre [...], [crushes] Fanon’s *Damnés de la terre* under the weight of his own extreme anticolonialist rage [...].’<sup>226</sup> Although Sartre was himself engaged with the decolonial struggle, it cannot be doubted that the inclusion of his preface with Fanon’s work was a good opportunity for him to strongly align himself with this

---

<sup>226</sup> Gérard Genette, *Paratexts: Thresholds of Interpretation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), pp. 271-272.

particular cause. However, the degree to which he used this text merely as a conduit for his own development of anticolonial thought far outstrips that of Fanon and the impact of this turn of thought will be examined later in this section.

To see Sartre's preface as fulfilling only self-interested aims would be to neglect Watts' argument concerning the relevancy of the preface in the paratext. For Watts, the purpose of Sartre's preface was threefold: working as a way of perpetuating the dying practice of patronage for emerging colonial writers whilst resisting the inevitable and 'ultimate futility' of the need to 'lend a name' to a text and as a method of blurring boundaries between the paratext and the critical essay.<sup>227</sup> The 'ultimate futility' of Sartre's endeavours is manifested in several ways. Firstly, Fanon himself requested that Sartre write the preface to his text, which runs entirely contrary to the purposes of the colonial, and postcolonial, concept of patronage. For colonial patrons, the, 'authority that their names conferred helped texts from the colonies and overseas departments find their way to metropolitan and nonmetropolitan readers.'<sup>228</sup> Secondly, by the time Sartre wrote the preface to *Les Damnés de la terre*, the repercussions of the Second World War had put paid to the total faith in authorial authority of the writers of the colonial empire and begun to change the power structures between the colonised writer and the colonial patron.<sup>229</sup>

---

<sup>227</sup> See Watts, *Packaging Post/Coloniality*, pp. 72-95.

<sup>228</sup> Ibid. p. 72.

<sup>229</sup> See Watts for a fuller discussion of the development of postcolonial writers, the decline in need for colonial patrons and the socio-cultural context in which this occurred.

Consequently, the patronage of postcolonial writers following the war years (and therefore, the *départementalisation* of several colonial territories, including Martinique, in 1946) had a revised purpose and focus, and was modern and forward thinking. Indeed, as Watts notes,

[t]o be a patron of these vibrant new literatures from the colonies was to be an active participant in France's efforts to discover a postwar identity that was not tainted by the German occupation or the Vichy regime.<sup>230</sup>

The 'ultimate futility' of this patronage then develops from the fact that an allographic preface for the likes of Fanon was more or less redundant of meaning. Fanon did not necessarily need the support of Sartre and the fame of his name to propagate his ideology and promote his texts amongst Francophone countries, nor indeed, (perhaps most importantly) was the text ever intended for a European readership, the fact of which Sartre was very well aware, saying, 'Européen, je vole le livre d'un ennemi et j'en fais un moyen de guérir l'Europe. Profitez-en.'<sup>231</sup> Watts highlights Sartre's declining influence in the realm of anticolonial / postcolonial literature by linking this to Sartre's over-exaggerated insistence on the role of violence in Fanon's text in his preface, 'the rhetorical violence of that last preface [*Les Damnés de la terre*] paradoxically underscores Sartre's growing sense of irrelevance in the articulation of anticolonial thought.'<sup>232</sup> Yet, despite the fact that Sartre felt a sense of disconnection with the very anticolonial movement he supported, the violence he describes and platform he provides for it in this preface consequently thrusts him back into the spotlight, and brings Fanon's thought to a new audience but in a way it is unlikely he would have expected or fully condoned.

---

<sup>230</sup> Watts, *Packaging Post/Coloniality*, pp. 87-88.

<sup>231</sup> Jean-Paul Sartre, 1961 preface to Frantz Fanon, *Les Damnés de la terre* (Paris: Éditions La Découverte, 2011), pp. 431-448 (p.436).

<sup>232</sup> Watts, *Packaging Post/Coloniality*, p. 8.

However, between Genette and Watts, the exaggeration of one of the basis premises of Fanon's work in *Les Damnés de la terre* is rarely discussed as a major contributing factor towards a developing sense of notoriety associated with Fanon's name and his anticolonial engagement in the decolonizing and postcolonial world. Both critics consider Sartre's preface to the text in terms of what it principally means for him as the allographic author instead of focusing primarily on the impact on Fanon posthumously as the original writer. This privileging of Sartre's experience (despite the fact that he believed it to be a futile addition to the text) once again foregrounds the perpetuation of the legacy of patronage as a way of maintaining colonial control over literary output from the colonized world.

It is in *Les Damnés de la terre* that we can see a shift in the development of Sartre's thought in relation to Fanon and vice versa. By bringing the concept of violence in the context of the anticolonial struggle to its ultimate end – that is the death of the colonizer and the triumph of anticolonialism – Sartre becomes more of a Fanonian thinker than Fanon himself. Fanon, however, was deeply influenced by Sartre's 1960 text *Critique de la raison dialectique* in his writing of *Les Damnés de la terre*, and Sartrean terms of 'praxis' and 'project' are to be found throughout in this text (although these will not be rendered in the Farrington translation). Despite the philosophical understanding however, a tension remained between Fanon and Sartre, on the basis that Fanon felt 'convinced' of white people's 'physiological horror of us blacks' and, as Macey notes,

his conviction that this was the case did not make for an easy relationship with Sartre. Fanon did not hate white people as such, but he could not forget that Sartre was French and would not forgive him for it.<sup>233</sup>

The relationship with Fanon, his legacy and family did not improve following Fanon's death. In 1968, Fanon's widow requested the publisher to remove Sartre's preface from *Les Damnés de la terre* following the pro-Israeli position Sartre took during the Six Day War in 1967, which directly contrasted with that of Algeria.<sup>234</sup> Paradoxically however, in the same year as this request was granted (albeit partly, as although the preface was removed from the book itself, it was provided with the book as an insert supplementary pamphlet),<sup>235</sup> the complete book of preface and text was published in the English translation by Constance Farrington. It is this version of the text, rather than the French original, which would have such an impact upon the perception and reception of Fanonian thought for the rest of the century and across the world.

### **The translation of meaning and intent in Sartre's preface to *Les Damnés de la terre***

The influence then of Sartre's preface is far reaching, both in terms of contemporary understanding of Fanon's philosophy and continuing to the present day. Hannah Arendt, in particular, occupies a conflicted position as regards Fanon's ideology, at once criticizing Fanon's apparent propensity to resort to violent methods at any opportunity and acknowledging the fact that Sartre plays an important role in the way that Fanon, and violence, is perceived by readers of the text. Yet, although she recognizes the role that Sartre plays in shifting

---

<sup>233</sup> Macey, *Frantz Fanon*, p. 460.

<sup>234</sup> See Macey, *Frantz Fanon*, p. 467.

<sup>235</sup> See Macey, *Frantz Fanon*, p. 468.

understanding of Fanon and his texts, she too still remains clearly influenced by the preface and views Fanon's ideology as focused on the use of violence to achieve anticolonial aims. Arendt's own understanding of violence centres on strength, and the shift in possession in strength, and also power. Crucially, for her, power can be both created and destroyed by the deployment of violence, and although she sees it as, at times, justifiable, it is never a legitimate way of exerting strength or power. She writes, 'legitimacy, when challenged, bases itself on an appeal to the past, while justification relates to an end that lies in the future. [...] Its justification loses in plausibility the further its intended end recedes into the future.'<sup>236</sup>

Considering Watts' assertion that the violence of the language Sartre uses in the preface is in indirect proportion to his perceived value as an allographic author, Sartre's ambitions to bring Fanon's thought to its logical endpoint (as he perceives it) are clear, 'j'en ai fait une [a preface], cependant, pour mener au bout la dialectique [...].'<sup>237</sup> The translation of the original authorial intent is evident in the recognition of his preface of having no intrinsic value to the overall meaning of the text, '[...] Fanon ne vous 'met' rien du tout; son ouvrage –si brûlant pour d'autres – reste pour vous glacé; on y parle de vous souvent, à vous jamais.'<sup>238</sup> Nevertheless, he presents a preface in which Fanon's ideas are manipulated to suit a European readership and Sartre's own purposes of presenting the issues of decolonization to the colonizers, who themselves are also undergoing their own process of decolonization through the loss and departmentalization of past

---

<sup>236</sup> Hannah Arendt, *On Violence* (London: The Penguin Press, 1970), p. 52.

<sup>237</sup> Sartre, 1961 preface to *Les Damnés de la terre*, p. 443.

<sup>238</sup> Ibid. p. 433.

dependent colonies. He therefore undertakes a twofold translation of the text, in terms of the meaning of the text and its target readership; in so doing, Sartre can be said to be re-colonizing Fanon's thought and almost entirely re-translating it for a French metropolitan audience. Although Arendt sees Sartre's development of Fanon's thought as, '[going] much further in his glorification of violence than Sorel [...] further than Fanon himself, whose argument he wishes to bring to its conclusion [...]'<sup>239</sup> she does not see this as a manipulation of the text, or a misrepresentation of it to a European audience, for whom it was never originally intended. Here, for Arendt, the problem lies in the exaggeration of the violence within the text, which then influences her own perception of Fanon and the programme of reform he puts forward in *Les Damnés de la terre*. Her insistence that Fanon – along with others – glorified violence in their work is evident throughout *On Violence*, and she clarifies this assertion by noting that they, 'were motivated by a much deeper hatred of moral standards than the conventional Left, which was chiefly inspired by compassion and a burning desire for justice.'<sup>240</sup> Yet nowhere in this text does she concede that the violence that Fanon describes was for him the violence that he witnessed on a daily basis in Algeria – violence, and the effects of violence, for some, is a fact of life. Macey explains that,

there was nothing mythical about the bombs in the Cafeteria and the Otomatic and Fanon had no need to read Sorel to learn about violence. The situation in Algeria was such that violence was simply a reality, even *the* reality.<sup>241</sup>

Indeed, the lack of awareness of the social context in which *Les Damnés de la terre* was originally written, and these consequences of the misappropriation of

---

<sup>239</sup> Arendt, *On Violence*, p. 12.

<sup>240</sup> Ibid. pp. 65-66.

<sup>241</sup> Macey, *Frantz Fanon*, p. 465 (emphasis in original).

Fanon's work, so amply demonstrated in Arendt's reading of Fanon, are rarely mentioned, even amongst Genette and Watts, part of whose purpose is to analyse the function of the preface within the framework of the paratext as a whole.

### **Conclusion - The implications of the widespread repercussions of Sartre's preface and multiple translations of *Les Damnés de la terre* on the reputation of Frantz Fanon**

Homi Bhabha's foreword to the 2004 translation by Richard Philcox is very much a case in point of a general misappropriation of Fanon to serve other causes around which his ideology may be worked, and, to a much lesser degree, he thus perpetuates the work begun by Sartre. Bhabha's central argument to this text is the fundamental role that Fanon and his ideology play in the black consciousness movement. He reads the position of violence in a much less radical form than Sartre, nevertheless he sees the decolonial struggle as being part of the fight for 'psycho-affective survival and a search for human agency',<sup>242</sup> taking on Fanon's emphasis on the psychological toll of the Algerian revolutionary movement in *Les Damnés de la terre*. Yet this discussion of Fanon's work not only revolves around his relevance to a movement that was still in its relative infancy at the time of his death in 1961, but also highlights the various revolutions around the world which were supposedly influenced by Fanon's writing on violence, from the Black Panther movement in America, through Steve Biko in South Africa and Bobby Sands in Belfast to the Shiite revolt in 1960s and 1970s Iran.<sup>243</sup> In each of these instances that he cites, little

---

<sup>242</sup> Homi K. Bhabha, 'Framing Fanon' in Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, trans. Richard Philcox, pp. xxviii-xxx (p. xxxvi).

<sup>243</sup> See Bhabha's foreword 'Framing Fanon' in *The Wretched of the Earth* for a more detailed examination of these advocates of Fanon's ideology, pp. xxviii – xxx.



documentary evidence is actually given to prove these claims and all draw on the concept of violence that Fanon is supposed to have perpetuated. Here, despite his claim to understand the manipulation of the text at Sartre's hand, Bhabha still talks of Fanon's *own* influence over others reading the translated text of *The Wretched of the Earth*, neglecting the fact that there is the distinct possibility that not all chapters were read (as previously mentioned, the preface, chapter on violence and the conclusion were often the most carefully read); that the readership is likely to view Sartre and Fanon's position as one and the same and finally, perhaps most importantly, none of these readers experienced the text in its original state. That is to say, no one experienced Fanon directly, but a translated version of the same, with the varying emphases, interests and socio-political and cultural agendas that any translator may have.

Kathryn Batchelor has noted the discrepancies in translators' approach to the question of violence in *The Wretched of the Earth*, showing that in the Persian translation Ali Shariati played down the concept of violence, whilst the combination of Sartre's preface, Farrington's translation and the paratext of the American editions – all foregrounding the element of violence in the text – led Fanon's text to become a major publishing success in America in the 1960s.<sup>244</sup>

Between the two translations produced of *Les Damnés de la terre*, Fanon's ideologies have been appropriated for a wide range of revolutionary causes, and paradoxically through the multiple espousals of his work, his reputation for the supposed violence of his writing has superseded all others. Fanon's voice, then,

---

<sup>244</sup> Batchelor, 'Fanon: In and Through Translation' Unpublished Paper at University of Birmingham, 25.02.14.

in stark contrast to the aims of Richard Philcox in his translation, has therefore become increasingly particularized in its multiple translations, with a lack of awareness common amongst readers that translations are anything other than an interpretation of a text and intentions, rather than the words of the writer themselves, leading to a continuing misinterpretation and misrepresentation of Fanon – both in terms of his political and personal beliefs.

## Chapter 3

### ***Chronique des sept misères, Solibo magnifique, Texaco* and the use of Glissant's theory of Relation to examine their translations**

#### **Choice of source language texts**

The work of Patrick Chamoiseau and Édouard Glissant has for a long time been inextricably linked, whether through the influence that Glissant's theory of antillanité had on the Créolité movement in which Chamoiseau has played a key role (even if Glissant himself was keen not to align himself closely with the Créolité), or through their later literary and socially engaged collaborations.<sup>245</sup>

Their literary methods and what they seek to achieve in their fictional writing are frequently very similar. Broadly, they aim to recuperate the liminal lived experience to the centre of our consciousness and to bring the outside of society into a dialogue with the 'insiders', so to speak. Indeed, Dominique Chancé argues that in reading the work of Chamoiseau and Glissant, one's understanding of the other is enhanced, '[...] le texte de Glissant a un effet démultiplicateur et amplificateur sur le texte de Chamoiseau tandis que le texte de Glissant devient peut-être plus accessible du fait de ce dialogue avec Chamoiseau.'<sup>246</sup> Furthermore, it is in part through Glissant's endorsement that Chamoiseau's work has reached a wider audience, for as Chancé also notes,

---

<sup>245</sup> See Patrick Chamoiseau and Édouard Glissant, *Quand les murs tombent. L'identité nationale hors la loi?* (Paris: Galaade, 2007) and *L'intraitable beauté du monde, adresse à Barack Obama* (Paris: Galaade, 2009).

<sup>246</sup> Dominique Chancé, 'Édouard Glissant et Patrick Chamoiseau. Construire un paradigme antillais', in *Littératures Francophones: Parodies, pastiches, réécritures*, ed. by Lise Gauvin, Cécile Van den Avenne, Véronique Corinus and Ching Selao (Lyon: ENS Éditions, 2013), open edition ebook, para. 21.

le bénéfice que Chamoiseau tire de Glissant est d'emblée celui d'un élargissement du contexte, de son 'contexte médian'. Alors que le récit de *Chronique des sept misères* pouvait paraître très martinicocentré, la préface de Glissant le rappelle à une dimension américaine.<sup>247</sup>

It is therefore because of this interconnectivity and the similarity of themes between the two writers and their texts that it seems appropriate to examine Glissant's theory of relation as a translation theory using three of Chamoiseau's most well-known texts in English translation.

Like Glissant, Patrick Chamoiseau's fiction deals with aspects of Martinican (and Caribbean) life, both pre- and post-departmentalization. He focuses on questions of belonging and liminality in terms of the island's relationship to France and the rest of the Caribbean, and the islanders' own identity mediated through the use of both French and Creole languages. Ashcroft et al define liminality as,

describing an 'in-between' space in which cultural change may occur: the *transcultural space* in which strategies for personal or communal self-hood may be elaborated [...]. For instance, the colonized subject may dwell in the liminal space between *colonial discourse* and the assumption of a new 'non-colonial' identity. But such identification is never simply a movement from one identity to another, it is a constant process of engagement, contestation and *appropriation*.<sup>248</sup>

Liminality is crucial to Chamoiseau's work, in terms of both a geographical, cultural and linguistic space, belonging to all and none at the same time, nominally 'French' whilst attempting to assert a reassessment of a Creole identity. Most importantly for Chamoiseau, occupying a liminal position is to occupy a place, either physically or figuratively, that is never entirely fixed or certain. It is manifested in his character of 'le marqueur de paroles' who uses

---

<sup>247</sup> Ibid. para. 15.

<sup>248</sup> Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths and Helen Tiffin, *Post-Colonial Studies: The Key Concepts*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. (New York: Routledge, 2013), p. 145 (emphasis in original).

both French and Creole, whilst participating in the narrative and maintaining an observational position at the same time (the character of ‘le marqueur de paroles’ is examined later in this chapter). Not only does he examine the problematic notion of Martinican identity through the novel form, he also theorized the concept of Créolité in *Éloge de la créolité*, written with Jean Bernabé and Raphaël Confiant in 1989. This argues for a revalorization of the Creole identity, as distinct from those which originally played a role in its creation, ‘ni Européens, ni Africains, ni Asiatiques, nous nous proclamons Créoles’<sup>249</sup> whilst remaining at the same time conscious of, yet separate from the world around them, describing it as, ‘une sorte d’enveloppe mentale au mitan de laquelle se bâtitira notre monde en pleine conscience du monde.’<sup>250</sup>

The texts that make up the corpus of this chapter are *Chronique des sept misères* (1986), *Solibo magnifique* (1988) and *Texaco* (1992) and their translations. These texts demonstrate the development of Chamoiseau’s use of Creole in the written novel alongside the notion of créolité and his strategies for working with an oral language in a written form. Creole is not only a language but also an umbrella term for the culture which it inhabits, and Chamoiseau’s novels explore the socio-political and cultural clashes provoked by Creole speakers’ attempts to assert themselves culturally and socially in the face of French hegemony. In employing both French and Creole alongside an ethnographic style (although not exclusively), Chamoiseau is drawing attention to this tension between the socio-cultural connotations of speaking either or both languages and, ‘in *Chronique* and *Solibo*, Chamoiseau’s mixture of language is part of a wider strategy for

---

<sup>249</sup> Bernabé, Chamoiseau and Confiant, *Éloge de la créolité*, p. 13.

<sup>250</sup> Ibid.

defying the opposition of oral and written culture, particularly as embodied in the opposition of spoken Creole and written French.’<sup>251</sup> Yet, by positioning himself as ‘le marqueur de paroles’ he situates himself in the margins of both the texts and society, allowing him to redraw boundaries between fact and fiction, the use of French and Creole languages, and oral and written storytelling traditions.

The task then presented to the translator of these texts is one of negotiation, exchange and understanding, and, calls upon the translator to mimic Chamoiseau and work to resituate the boundaries between the source text and translation. As Chamoiseau ‘Chamoisifies’ language by blurring the influences of French on Creole and vice versa, so the translator should enter into a dialogue with the working languages of source and target language text, rather than skewing their attention in the direction of the target language readership needs, as so often is the case. I seek to examine how far this is possible, and if it has been achieved in the translations of the chapter corpus texts. Glissant’s relevance to this examination lies in the fact that in *Introduction à une poétique du divers* he describes the translator as not just someone who carries over meaning from one language and socio-cultural context to another but as someone who plays an active role in creating new language, residing between the source and target language cultures.

The three novels under examination in this chapter constitute the main elements, and are arguably the most frequently read and studied, of Chamoiseau’s literary œuvre. They have been the focus of numerous studies highlighting various

---

<sup>251</sup> Wendy Knepper, *Patrick Chamoiseau: A Critical Introduction* (Jackson: University of Mississippi Press, 2012), p. 65.

important themes in his work, including but, of course, not limited to opacity, Créolité and his use of Creole, his approach to narrative structures, the role of community in society and the risk of social atomization in the face of metropolitan commercial dominance and the character of the ‘marqueur de paroles’. These texts have shaped my understanding of Chamoiseau’s position within the broader landscape of Martinican and Caribbean literature, but due to the close focus on translation strategies in this chapter, they do not play a prominent role in the methodological framework of this chapter, providing instead a backdrop against which the main theme of the examination of the English translation of his novels may play out.<sup>252</sup>

## Methodology

The methodology to be used in this chapter relies on a reading of Édouard Glissant’s theory of *relation* in *Poétique de la relation* (Gallimard, 1990) as a translation theory. It will employ *relation* as a way of examining the interrelation

---

<sup>252</sup> See, for example, the following texts which is a selection of the literature that deals not only with Chamoiseau’s texts specifically, but also with his position within the French Caribbean literary canon and themes which appear frequently in his work; *Intimate Enemies: Translation in Francophone Contexts*, ed. by Kathryn Batchelor and Claire Bisdorff (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2013), Celia Britton, *The Sense of Community in French Caribbean Fiction* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2008), Chris Bongie, *Islands and Exiles: The Creole Identities of Post/Colonial Literature* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1998), Chris Bongie, *Friends and Enemies: The Scribal Politics of Post/Colonial Literature* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2008), Richard D.E. Burton, ‘Debrouya Pa Peche, Or Il y a Toujours Moyen de Moyenner: Patterns of Opposition in the Fiction of Patrick Chamoiseau’, *Callaloo*, 16.2 (1993), 466-481, *The Conte: Oral and Written Dynamics*, ed. by Janice Carruthers and Maeve McCusker (Bern: Peter Lang, 2010), Roy Chandler Caldwell Jr., ‘Creole Voice, Creole Time: Narrative Strategies in Chamoiseau’s *Chronique des sept misères*’, *Romance Quarterly*, 47.2 (2000), 103-111, Dominique Chancé, *Patrick Chamoiseau, écrivain postcolonial et baroque* (Paris: Champion, 2010), J. Michael Dash, *The Other America: Caribbean Literature in a New World Context* (Charlottesville and London: University Press of Virginia, 1998), J. Michael Dash, ‘Postcolonial Caribbean Identities’, in *The Cambridge History of African and Caribbean Literature*, Vol. 2, ed. by F. Abiola Irele and Simon Gikandi (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), pp. 785–796, Lorna Milne, *Patrick Chamoiseau: Espaces d’une écriture antillaise* (Amsterdam and New York: Rodopi, 2006), Nick Nesbitt, *Voicing Memory: History and Subjectivity in French Caribbean Literature* (Charlottesville and London: University of Virginia Press, 2003), Nick Nesbitt, *Caribbean Critique: Antillean Critical Theory from Toussaint to Glissant* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2014), Luciano C. Picanço, *Vers un concept de littérature antillaise martiniquaise* (New York: Peter Lang, 2000).

of source and target text and language, rather than leaning on binary appreciations of translation theory put forward by translation theorists such as Lawrence Venuti and Gideon Toury (examined in Chapter 2). This is particularly pertinent as it is clear that, ‘European norms have dominated literary production, and those norms have ensured that only certain kinds of text, those that will not prove alien to the receiving culture, come to be translated’<sup>253</sup>, to the extent that, ‘the metaphor of the colony as a translation, a copy of the original located elsewhere on the map, has been recognized.’<sup>254</sup> However, whilst this chapter calls for a more Caribbean focused conceptualization of translation theory, and a movement away from the blanket application of Western translation theory to Caribbean texts, it is important to note that this does not constitute a wholesale rejection of Western translation theories in a Caribbean context.<sup>255</sup> Rather, it encourages a more thoughtful use of Western theory that may be of particular pertinence to postcolonial literature.

The challenge presented by these more traditional translation theories lies in the fact that they still assess translation in terms of its effect upon the target language culture, unlike, as Bandia puts it, ‘postcolonial translation theory [which] sought to account for the impact of translation on a colonized source culture, raising questions about the ideals of fluency, equivalence and universalism that had

---

<sup>253</sup> Susan Bassnett and Harish Trivedi, ‘Of Colonies, Cannibals and Vernaculars’, in *Postcolonial Translation: Theory and Practice* (London: Routledge, 2002), pp. 1-18 (p. 5).

<sup>254</sup> Ibid.

<sup>255</sup> When referring to Western translation theory, I refer to both the common binary appreciation of the term as put forward by the likes of Lawrence Venuti and Anthony Pym (as described in Chapter 2 of this thesis) and also theories that welcome the presence of the foreign ST into the experience of the target language text, or practice a form of linguistic hospitality, such as those of Antoine Berman or Paul Ricœur, respectively. Where the theory that I propose differs from the latter, specifically, is that more than just accepting the foreign into the source text, there exists a dialogue in the liminal space between the two languages, thus creating a more reciprocal relationship between the texts.



characterized early translation theory.’<sup>256</sup> He draws attention to the fact that traditional translation theory assumes an implicit level of similarity between the status of the languages and cultures being worked upon, which does not exist in terms of postcolonial translation theory. Instead, postcolonial translation theory is aware of and accommodates the fact that, ‘literary texts are often hybrid in nature, linguistically and culturally heterogeneous. These hybrid texts call for translation strategies and theories which can account for the layering of cultures and discourses in the postcolonial text.’<sup>257</sup> The hybridity of these texts necessarily negates the notion of a single language source language text, as conceptualized in traditional translation theories, drawing in questions of layering and rhizomatic systems of understanding even before the translation is considered.

In *Mille Plateaux* Deleuze and Guattari first put forward the theory of the rhizome, which Glissant developed into his own theory of Relation. They conceptualized the idea of the rhizome as a root, which, rather than growing deeper into the ground, grows out horizontally, linking together with other rhizomatic roots and creating an ever growing network of cultures, or languages. The image of the rhizome in a socio-cultural sense is a structure made of multiplicity,

Le rhizome connecte un point quelconque avec un autre point quelconque, et chacun de ses traits ne renvoie pas nécessairement à des traits de même nature, il met en jeu des régimes de signes très différents et même des états de non-signes. Le rhizome ne se laisse ramener ni à l’Un ni au multiple. Il n’est pas l’Un qui devient deux, ni même qui deviendrait directement trois, quatre ou cinq, etc. [...] Il n’est pas fait d’unités, mais de dimensions, ou plutôt de directions mouvantes. Il n’a pas de commencement ni de fin, mais toujours un milieu, par lequel il pousse et déborde.<sup>258</sup>

---

<sup>256</sup> Paul F. Bandia, *Translation as Reparation: Writing and Translation in Postcolonial Africa* (Manchester: St. Jerome Publishing, 2008), p.6.

<sup>257</sup> Ibid.

<sup>258</sup> Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *Mille plateaux* (Paris: Les Éditions de Minuit, 1980), p. 31.

Crucially, Deleuze and Guattari noted that rhizomes cannot be measured or examined individually - their worth comes from the collectivity and connectivity that they promote because, ‘un rhizome ne cesserait de connecter des chaînons sémiotiques, des organisations de pouvoir, des occurrences renvoyant aux arts, aux sciences, aux luttes sociales.’<sup>259</sup> The ‘plateaux’ of the text’s title are defined as something that is ‘toujours au milieu, ni début ni fin. Un rhizome est fait des plateaux.’<sup>260</sup> Despite the fact that the rhizome is – by nature – rooted, it still continues to reach out to the Other. As Glissant notes,

la notion de rhizome maintiendrait donc le fait de l’enracinement, mais récuse principe de ce que j’appelle une poétique de la Relation, selon laquelle toute identité s’entend dans un rapport vers l’Autre.<sup>261</sup>

Although rhizomes can be broken, connections are not necessarily completely ruptured, but find an alternative manner to reconnect.

Un rhizome peut être rompu, brisé en un endroit quelconque, il reprend suivant telle ou telle de ses lignes et suivant d’autres lignes. [...] Il y a rupture dans le rhizome chaque fois que des lignes segmentaires explosent dans une ligne de fuite, mais la ligne de fuite fait partie du rhizome. Ces lignes ne cessent de se renvoyer les unes aux autres. C’est pourquoi on ne peut jamais se donner un dualisme ou une dichotomie, même sous la forme rudimentaire du bon ou du mauvais.<sup>262</sup>

Therefore, the rhizomatic system allows for infinite opportunities for interconnectivity and exchange, which recalls the multiple interpretations of texts that can occur through retranslation in different socio-cultural contexts. At times, rhizomatic links between source and target language text can appear to collapse, only to be reconnected in a new manifestation of the text in translation.

---

<sup>259</sup> Ibid. p. 14.

<sup>260</sup> Ibid. p. 32.

<sup>261</sup> Édouard Glissant, *Poétique de la relation* (Paris: Éditions Gallimard, 1990), p. 23.

<sup>262</sup> Deleuze and Guattari, *Mille plateaux*, p. 16.

The emphasis of the rhizomes forging connections in all directions, and reciprocally, whilst remaining situated in the middle, with so many strata of interconnections that there is no possibility of discerning a tangible beginning or end, recalls the liminality of the world in between the source text and the translation. This space between the two languages in which a unique language connection and creation is possible is a space of multiple possible meanings, languages and linguistic interactions and interconnectivity. As this space lies firmly in the middle, almost functioning as a plateau between the source and the target language texts, the rhizomatic connections in translation are a far more fruitful framework from which to examine linguistic interaction in a postcolonial context than a more commonly received binary understanding of the terms and functions of a traditional appreciation of translation.

Growing up alongside the theory of Negritude, Dash notes that,

Glissant felt some impatience with the symbolic mapping of the Caribbean that had taken place. The dualities that characterized the poetic discourse of negritude, opposing master and slave, hill and plain, vertical defiance and horizontal passivity, were essentially an extension of political rhetoric. Glissant's early poetry suggests that nature does not bear meaning in a clear and legible way.<sup>263</sup>

The rejection of dualistic modes of thought in his early poetry began to crystallize concepts that would later become theories of opacity, *errance* and Relation. Glissant develops this latter system of thought as part of his theory that all people, languages and cultures are interconnected, which takes in notions of *la totalité*, and *errance*. Movement is key in this theory - between people, languages, cultures and places, and examines how in constantly moving, new relations and networks are forged. It also allows for travel in and out of different

---

<sup>263</sup> J. Michael Dash, *Édouard Glissant* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), p. 11.

cultural zones, and the return to one's 'native' culture necessary for true Relation, symbolized in the archipelagic structure of the Caribbean islands that, 'illustre naturellement la pensée de la Relation.'<sup>264</sup> This non-linear pattern of travel between and around the Caribbean islands not only illustrates the interconnectivity inherent in Relation, but also works as a metaphor for the shuttling between the source and target text during the process of translation. As Lise Gauvin notes, because of Glissant's belief that in some way it is possible to connect every language in the world, *retour* and *détour* are crucial in the understanding of linguistic movement in translation as,

le langage tel que le conçoit Glissant offre la possibilité de cette errance qui, au terme du parcours, permet le *retour* vers une langue réappropriée, langue redevenue celle du fils par le *détour* vers son irréductible étrangeté. [...]. La langue s'archipélise et rejoint la dimension du Tout-Language.<sup>265</sup>

The fact that the journey between the two texts can be made multiple times, with a different outcome each time, emphasizes the rhizomatic network created in translation, with the potential for translations in the past, present and future simultaneously interlinking and connecting with the source text. Indeed,

the way two languages interpenetrate in a specific act of translation actualizes the network of unpredictable ties that every single language has to every other language in cultural, geographic and affective terms. At its best, translation is Relation.<sup>266</sup>

Implicit in this understanding of translation in terms of *relation* is the acknowledgement that language itself is constantly in flux; whilst language is often used as synecdoche for a whole culture and identity, it however cannot be said to be static.

---

<sup>264</sup> Glissant, *Poétique de la relation*, p. 46.

<sup>265</sup> Lise Gauvin, 'L'imaginaire des langues: traces d'une poétique' [www.edouardglissant.fr/gauvin.pdf](http://www.edouardglissant.fr/gauvin.pdf) (accessed 29.07.15), p. 280 (emphasis in original).

<sup>266</sup> Max Hantel, 'Rhizomes and the Space of Translation: On Edouard Glissant's Spiral Retelling', *Small Axe*, 42 (2013), 100-112, p. 108.

For Deleuze and Guattari, the notion of a mother tongue or static language is impossible, not only because, ‘une langue ne se referme jamais sur elle-même que dans une fonction d’impuissance,’<sup>267</sup> but also because,

[...] il n’y a pas de langue en soi, ni d’universalité du langage, mais un concours de dialectes, de patois, d’argots, de langues spéciales. [...] Il n’y a pas de langue-mère, mais prise de pouvoir par une langue dominante dans une multiplicité politique. La langue se stabilise autour d’une paroisse, d’une évêché, d’une capitale.<sup>268</sup>

Glissant accepts the movement of language, and the interpenetration of different linguistic aspects into other cultural contexts and therefore, also sees the translator as not just someone who carries over meaning from one language and socio-cultural context to another but as someone who plays an active role in creating new language. Thus, the translator inhabits the position of understanding both the uniqueness of languages and their ability to intermix - as he terms it, a *métissage*<sup>269</sup> - and create something new, representing part of the process and meaning itself of créolisation. Glissant notes that, ‘le langage du traducteur opère comme la créolisation et comme la Relation dans le monde, c’est-à-dire que ce langage produit de l’imprévisible. Art de l’imaginaire, dans ce sens la traduction est une véritable opération de créolisation [...]’<sup>270</sup> This notion of translation as an act of both creolisation and the imagination is particularly relevant when considering the potential challenges presented in dealing with the interweaving of both French and Creole vocabulary and non-linear timeframes in use in *Chronique*, *Solibo* and *Texaco*. Thus, translation is both cultural and

---

<sup>267</sup> Deleuze and Guattari, *Mille plateaux*, p. 14.

<sup>268</sup> Ibid.

<sup>269</sup> Françoise Lionnet also employs the term ‘métissage’ to encompass not just socio-cultural and linguistic collaboration and exchange, but also as a way to combat racial and political hegemony. She describes it as, ‘the site of undecidability and indeterminacy, where solidarity becomes the fundamental principle of political action against hegemonic languages.’ See Françoise Lionnet, *Autobiographical Voices: Race, Gender and Self-Portraiture* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1989), pp. 5-6.

<sup>270</sup> Édouard Glissant, *Introduction à une poétique du divers* (Paris: Éditions Gallimard, 1996), p. 45.

political, and mirrors the movements of languages in the routes that translations often take – predominantly moving from English into lesser spoken languages, rather than the opposite direction, frequently stabilizing around the capitals of the Anglophone world.

Whilst one must clearly understand and bear in mind the necessity of the political and cultural framing of the translation, this chapter aims to develop the view of translation rhizomatically, in terms of a dialogue or a mapping between two points, rather than merely a transfer or a ‘carrying over’ of meaning from one rooted place to another. Glissant views translation as much more than the somewhat essentialist view of translation as a ‘transfer of meaning’. Because all languages are connected, languages can only exist in relation to each other. Similarly, translation can only exist in relation to languages, explaining why Glissant describes the act of translation as,

[...] un élément primordial d'exercice littéraire parce qu'elle a une fonction qui n'est pas une fonction comprimée, très techniquement spécialisée, mais qui *est en fonction poétique générale du rapport de toute langue à toute langue*. Par conséquent, la traduction devient un art en soi, avec *son champ qui est non pas le champ des langues, mais le champ du rapport des langues. Le champ de la relation des langues*.<sup>271</sup>

This imagery of ‘le champ des langues’ links into Deleuze and Guattari’s use of map imagery as a crucial way into understanding the interconnectivity of people, places and languages on a global scale. They note,

La carte ne reproduit pas un inconscient fermé sur lui-même, elle le construit. Elle concourt à la connexion des champs [...]. Elle fait elle-même partie du rhizome. La carte est ouverte, elle est connectable dans toutes ses dimensions, démontable, renversable, susceptible de recevoir constamment des modifications.<sup>272</sup>

---

<sup>271</sup> Luigia Pattano, ‘Traduire la relation des langues: un entretien avec Edouard Glissant’, para. 3, [www.mondesfrancophones.com](http://www.mondesfrancophones.com), (accessed 10.07.2014) (my emphasis).

<sup>272</sup> Deleuze and Guattari, *Mille plateaux*, p. 20.

In this chapter, I will aim to ascertain if a translation can be examined using the theory of Relation and rhizomatic systems. By using a methodology based on Deleuze and Guattari's conception of rhizomatic interconnectivity and Glissant's theory of Relation, I seek to understand if a translation can be understood in terms of a dialogue with the source language text, or if the translation continues to rely more predominantly on the influence of the target language readership needs. Whilst it may initially seem problematic to retain the terms 'source language text' (ST) and 'target language text' (TT) in my analyses of the texts and their translations, I would argue that it is possible to maintain this distinction for several reasons.

Firstly, Glissant himself never explicitly states that there must be a complete erasure of any starting points in the rhizomatic network. To be sure, a beginning is an inherent part to any theory or text, and the point of the theory of Relation, in terms of translation, is to show how by continually referring back to the source language text, and to other versions of the text written in different languages, a reciprocal relationship may be constructed between different language versions of the same text. What matters most in this form of translation is the interrelation of linguistic items and the mutual exchange between them, which is symptomatic of 'relation' and 'cette nouvelle pensée archipélique.'<sup>273</sup>

Secondly, to assume that the target language text, or translated text (TT) always signifies the end point of the translation's journey promotes the idea of the overarching importance of the needs of the target language readership, over those

---

<sup>273</sup> Glissant, *Introduction à une poétique du divers*, p. 45.

of the source language text, its author and original readership. This is predicated on Venuti and Toury's binary-based translation theories of the needs of the source text thought of in opposition to those of the target language text. Within the framework of the theory of relation, used as a translation theory, the commonly used terms of source text (ST) and target language text (TT) should be understood as signifying only their chronological order of production and does not suggest that future dialogues between them, or indeed, between the translated text and future translations, may not fruitfully occur. Glissant emphasized the interconnectivity of languages and in this way, translation is the manifestation par excellence of this. He does not seek, and for that matter, nor do I in this chapter, to replace one language or system with another, but to allow them to co-exist. Bringing texts into a dialogue in translation, 'est le signe et l'évidence que nous avons à concevoir dans notre imaginaire cette totalité des langues.'<sup>274</sup> Therefore, in this chapter, I retain the commonly accepted translation terminology of 'source text' and 'target/translated text' simply to clarify references, and not to reinforce any sense of a binary relationship between the texts.

### **Who and what is the 'marqueur de paroles'?**

In all three texts, Chamoiseau inhabits a number of roles – that of a by-stander and witness to a story unfolding, someone to whom a story is being told, and someone who teases out and pieces together family and socio-cultural history from what he has heard. The over-arching style of his writing is that of

---

<sup>274</sup> Glissant, *Introduction à une poétique du divers*, p. 45.



ethnography and he focuses on telling the stories of the everyday person. He refers to himself as ‘le marqueur de paroles’ and ‘l’ethnographe’, and uses the alter-ego ‘Oiseau de Cham’ almost interchangeably in all three texts, and this is translated across all three texts (but by different translators) as ‘the word scratcher’. Due to the prevalence of the use of this term and its importance in the context of Chamoiseau’s identity as a writer, I shall briefly explore the term of ‘marqueur de paroles’, his use of it, and its translation into English.

The term ‘marqueur de paroles’ encapsulates at once the desire to bind together the written and the oral aspects that exist in Chamoiseau’s concept of Créolité, and an attempt to pin down the fleeting nature of the disappearing art of traditional Martinican oral storytelling. Wells describes Chamoiseau in this position as,

ce narrateur extradiégetique [qui] sert non seulement de scripteur mais aussi de traducteur-transformateur qui essaie d’incorporer la créolité de l’expression orale dans le français de la transcription.<sup>275</sup>

Thus his work lies in between definitions - he is at the same time a writer and a transformer of these words. He is described as writing, ‘un type de roman qui n’est ni une abstraction purement littéraire ni une description fidèle de la réalité.’<sup>276</sup> This therefore deepens Chamoiseau’s involvement with the process of writing, further intertwining his presence in the text with that of the historical context in which he writes, heightening the sense that he is merely transcribing what he has been told. For Luciano C. Picano, Chamoiseau’s choice of writing

---

<sup>275</sup> Catherine Wells, *L’Oralité dans ‘Solibo magnifique’ de Patrick Chamoiseau* (Québec: GRELCA, Université Laval, 1994), pp. 102-103.

<sup>276</sup> Luciano C. Picano, *Vers un concept de littérature antillaise martiniquaise* (New York: Peter Lang, 2000), p. 84.

the narrative in the role of ethnographer is a technique employed in order to permit him to interact with the text in a number of different ways. He notes,

[Chamoiseau][...] se veut ethnographe, *marqueur de paroles*, simple *écrivain* d'histoires transmises. Ce statut, qui n'est qu'une technique de l'auteur *métahistoriographe*, donne à son discours littéraire l'atmosphère historique avec laquelle il va travailler. Dans *Texaco*, ce discours est tenu par Marie-Sophie Laborieux, qui *baille* l'histoire du quartier Texaco à un Chamoiseau présent, mais réduit à la fonction du preneur de notes. Il ne reprend la voix narrative qu'à la fin du livre dans le chapitre 'Résurrection'.<sup>277</sup>

By assuming this role of ethnographer, which allows movement in and out of the text, Chamoiseau – as we see in the above quotation – is able to '[open] up a space of voices, which resists narrative incorporation and whose presence as an outpost of history points to the need for further reclamation'.<sup>278</sup> The 'further reclamation' Knepper speaks of here touches upon the increasing integration of Creole into written texts and its rehabilitation into the socio-cultural lexicon, which must also be borne in mind when considering the translation of Chamoiseau's work. Furthermore, the multiplicity of narratives which characterize Chamoiseau's texts also reflect the community-minded focus and inter-relation prevalent in traditional Creole society. According to Knepper, this also requires Chamoiseau's 'marqueur de paroles' to fulfill another role, that of 'mediator in the relay of events'. She goes on, explaining that this is achieved through,<sup>279</sup>

[...] the composition of a tale in which he is both present as witness, suspect, and investigator and absent as the author of a fiction that takes place within the real rather than the imagined world. Rather than the collective 'nous' of narrators [see *Chronique des sept misères* and the interwoven tales of the *djobbeurs*], Chamoiseau stages his narrative performance as a kind of 'metteur-en-scène' in a novel that is both a wake for a dead storyteller and a wake for a dying storytelling form.<sup>280</sup>

---

<sup>277</sup> Picanço, *Vers un concept de littérature antillaise martiniquaise*, p. 85 (emphasis in original).

<sup>278</sup> Knepper, *Patrick Chamoiseau*, pp. 76-77.

<sup>279</sup> Knepper's quotation specifically relates to *Solibo magnifique*, but the point that Chamoiseau acts in multiple roles in the fiction itself, whilst remaining absent from the role of author can be usefully extrapolated to encompass narrative structure in both *Chronique des sept misères* and *Texaco*.

<sup>280</sup> Knepper, *Patrick Chamoiseau*, p. 78.

In pushing at the boundaries of narrative form, Chamoiseau begins to question the very function of narrative, in texts in which language is not just communicative but also fulfills a performative role and, '[evokes] the body, the land, and the environment in rhythmic, budding relations. Language and writing are depicted in motion, performance and gesture, undertaking a detour or imaginary marooning with the result that the narrative discourse takes on an active, embodied, and cognitive set of functions.'<sup>281</sup> The evocation of body, land and environment in terms of Relation through the writing of the 'marqueur de paroles' underscores the crucial role Chamoiseau's ethnographer plays - bringing together, moving apart and facilitating dialogue inside and outside the narrative, in ways which the reader may not have expected and which nevertheless recall the Relation involved in traditional Creole storytelling. Glissant himself describes Chamoiseau's position as 'marqueur de paroles' thus, 'c'est reconnaître qu'il marche à cette lisière de l'oral et de l'écrit où se joue une des perspectives actuelles de la littérature.'<sup>282</sup>

Chamoiseau's persona of 'marqueur de paroles' has also attracted criticism, with Celia Britton and Dominique Chancé questioning the purpose of Chamoiseau's assumption of the role. In *The Sense of Community in French Caribbean Fiction* Britton suggests that the persona of the 'marqueur de paroles' is part of Chamoiseau's fetishization of the past, and what he claims it represents for Martinique, that is, a return to community and a stronger, cohesive social and personal identity. This, she argues, also runs counter to his Créolité project and

---

<sup>281</sup> Ibid. pp. 111-112.

<sup>282</sup> Édouard Glissant, 'Un marqueur de paroles', in Patrick Chamoiseau, *Chronique des sept misères* (Paris: Éditions Gallimard, 1988), pp.3-6 (p. 6).

contributes to the creation of a mythological conception of what the island is and who its inhabitants are. She notes the liminal position that the ‘marqueur de paroles’ inhabits, this time acting as ‘a compromise between rural-traditional and urban-modernizing’,<sup>283</sup> demonstrating what could be considered as Chamoiseau’s sense of responsibility to the socio-cultural needs of Martinique, positioned as if a gatekeeper between fiction and reality, urban and rural, written and oral.

Despite Chamoiseau’s position as a ‘modern’ French writer, Britton finds the persona ‘a rather old-fashioned technique of the realist novel’<sup>284</sup> and she comments that the technique of writing a novel as if the novelist, ‘receives and transmits a story from someone else and guarantees its ‘reality’ by explaining the circumstances in which the narrative came into his possession’<sup>285</sup> is one to be found in the novels of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Therefore, the presence of the ‘marqueur de paroles’ becomes more problematic, because the layers of fiction that it seeks to portray as reality become increasingly more obvious. Britton suggests that in *Texaco*, ironically,

had Marie-Sophie’s own narrative been presented to us without any external comment – specifically, without all the explicit guarantees of its authenticity which the text constantly impresses on us – then we would have accepted it at face value.<sup>286</sup>

Furthermore, the position of the ‘marqueur de paroles’ problematizes the possibility of examining the novels from an ethnographic viewpoint because of the fact that it presents only his account, which is subjective and, ultimately, fictitious. The subjectivity of the ‘marqueur de paroles’ is also important in the

---

<sup>283</sup> Celia Britton, *The Sense of Community in French Caribbean Fiction* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2008), p. 108.

<sup>284</sup> Ibid.

<sup>285</sup> Ibid.

<sup>286</sup> Ibid, p. 109.

context of translation because of the manner in which the translators respond to Chamoiseau playing with the reader's perceptions of the text by rendering the fictional into a form of reality.

Rose-Myriam Réjouis, in her translator's afterword of the 1998 translation of *Texaco*, describes Chamoiseau as 'Oiseau de Cham, the character-author, ethnologist-writer, who also calls himself the word scratcher (le Marqueur de paroles).'<sup>287</sup> She does not interrogate any of Chamoiseau's multiple identities that he assumes in his writing (indeed, she herself switches between the terms 'word scratcher' and 'Oiseau de Cham' in *Texaco*'s translator's afterword without any explanation), nor does she elaborate on the reasons for choosing 'word scratcher' as her preferred translation of 'marqueur de paroles' in the glossary she and Vinokurov provide at the end of the text.

In the translator's afterword, 'Sublime Tumble', that accompanies Réjouis and Vinokurov's translation of *Solibo Magnificent* (published in 2000), Réjouis makes only one reference to the 'word scratcher' describing this persona as, 'a self-deprecating and self-conscious narrator'.<sup>288</sup> Later in the afterword, she talks at length about the distinction that Chamoiseau makes between 'language' and 'Language', and suggests that despite his attempts to draw French and Creole into a meaningful dialogue in the context of créolité, 'his preoccupation with Language, the realm of the artist, shields him from plummeting into a politicized

---

<sup>287</sup> Rose-Myriam Réjouis, Translator's Afterword in Patrick Chamoiseau, *Texaco*, trans. Rose-Myriam Réjouis and Val Vinokurov (London: Granta Books, 1998), p. 394.

<sup>288</sup> Rose-Myriam Réjouis, Translator's Afterword in Patrick Chamoiseau, *Solibo Magnificent*, trans. Rose-Myriam Réjouis and Val Vinokurov (London: Granta Books, 2000), pp.175-184 (p. 177).

and artistically paralyzing obsession with languages.’<sup>289</sup> This ignores the political engagement with language/Language that Chamoiseau undertakes in *Éloge de la Créolité*, along with fellow Creolists, Confiant and Bernabé, and brushes aside any implications that this may have for their translation.

A similar pattern can be observed in Linda Coverdale’s translator’s afterword that accompanies *Chronicle of the Seven Sorrows*, published in 1999. She discusses at great length Chamoiseau’s particular use of language, both French and Creole, the socio-cultural implications of such a linguistic employment, and how the particularity of it impacts upon her job as a translator. She describes Chamoiseau as,

a free-range writer who tries to keep his language ‘open’ so that readers will feel its humble, questing flexibility, a kind of remarkable mongrelism that proves perfect for the task at hand: presenting a deftly self-conscious form of Creoleness in the chronicle of ‘mouth-memory’ telling stories to a word scratcher.<sup>290</sup>

Although she neglects to tease out her understanding of this accepted term ‘word scratcher’ or how she decided to use this translation in her own work, she does footnote the use of the term by Glissant in his introduction ‘A Word Scratcher’. She describes the term in the notes accompanying the text as follows,

*A marqueur de paroles* is a ‘word scratcher’: in Martinican French, this neologism means a ‘writer’ or ‘novelist’, but Chamoiseau has made clear that to him the term means someone who seeks out and attempts to pass along the rich oral traditions of *Créolité*.<sup>291</sup>

The absence of a set of sources corroborating this information is a pity, as is her lack of engagement with the development and use of the term by Chamoiseau.

---

<sup>289</sup> Ibid. p. 182.

<sup>290</sup> Patrick Chamoiseau, *Chronicle of Seven Sorrows*, trans. Linda Coverdale (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1999), p. 215.

<sup>291</sup> Ibid. p. 219 (emphasis in original).

The scarcity of explanation surrounding the choice of ‘word scratcher’ as the accepted translation of ‘marqueur de paroles’ is both ironic and frustrating. It is ironic, given the level of Chamoiseau’s own engagement with all forms of the word, both written and spoken, in his theoretical and fictional writing. It is also frustrating, because it suggests – whether intentional or not – a focus on the Western target audience needs, rather than an examination of those of the writer, and because as translators, they too fulfill this role of ‘word scratcher’ by bringing the text into a new cultural context through translation.

### **Overview and Contextualization of *Chronique des sept misères*, *Solibo magnifique* and *Texaco***

Chamoiseau’s first three novels, published in 1986, 1988 and 1992 respectively, were chosen as the corpus of texts for this chapter because of their overarching themes of community, and its dissolution, identity, traditions, the relationships between the past and present Martinican communities, and between the French and Martinican inhabitants, and because of the liminal role that the ‘marqueur de paroles’ plays in all three novels. Loss, both emotional and physical, and frequently relating to the above themes, occupies a dominant position. The thematic concerns all feed into the *Éloge de la créolité*, which was published in 1989. Given Chamoiseau’s commitment to the need for recognition of how people, language and cultures mix and develop, his novels are an appropriate starting point for the examination of whether it is possible and meaningful to use Glissant’s theory of relation as a translation theory, as Glissant, too, sought to explore the relationship between the Self and Other, particularly in a postcolonial context, in his theory of Relation.

*Chronique des sept misères* was Chamoiseau's first novel to be published by Gallimard in 1986. It clearly announces several of the themes that are revisited in *Solibo magnifique* and *Texaco*, as well as *Éloge de la créolité*. These include his preoccupation with Creole language, oraliture, culture and the creation and the development of his role as 'le marqueur de paroles'. Chamoiseau explores these themes within the framework of a story based around seven *misères*, the odd-jobbers (djobbers) of the Fort de France marketplace in Martinique. The story sprawls out from the main character of Papi, a renowned market djobber, towards the other central characters to encompass digressions about not only the djobbers, their lives and their interactions with others working in and around the market, but also the jobs, relationships and lives of their mothers and grandparents, and the conceptions of their mothers and also the djobbers themselves. Each fragment of the story interconnects with that of another, strongly emphasizing the atmosphere of a close community portrayed in the novel, yet a community in danger from the encroaching commercialism and materialism caused by the growing influence of metropolitan France on local Martinican life. The very real and physical presence of this danger is highlighted both in actuality and also symbolically throughout the novel (for example, we note the incident towards the end of the novel in which foreign sailors brawl and eventually set fire to and destroy Chinotte's bar, symbolizing the destruction of self-sufficiency on the island) and is an area of interest in terms of how the translator sets about rendering it into English.



Pipi reappears briefly in *Solibo magnifique* and the interconnectivity of the stories in *Chronique*, and indeed, Chamoiseau's first two novels, reflects that of the Martinican community itself, and this lifestyle is typically traditionally Creole. As in *Solibo magnifique* and *Texaco*, Chamoiseau utilizes this interconnectivity – and the death of it in community life – as a vehicle for the dissemination of his concept of créolité. Although the manifesto for créolité was not published until 1989, three years after the publication of *Chronique des sept misères*, much of what Chamoiseau later theorizes is evident in this novel. For Chamoiseau and the other writers involved with the *Éloge de la créolité*, this movement stands as, 'l'agrégat interactionnel ou transactionnel, des éléments culturels caraïbes, européens, africains, asiatiques, et levantins, que le joug de l'Histoire a réunis sur le même sol'.<sup>292</sup> Chamoiseau felt that previous attempts by Martinican writers to reclaim their country and the culture from French imperialism had not gone far enough in creating a movement which related to, yet moved beyond, the constraints of the island's geographic space and location and questions relating to culture and language. Césaire's development of Négritude allowed a restructuring of thought concerning the relationship of the Martinican to the French colonizer, yet this creation of a new identity was stymied by the fetishization of Africa as the mother of their culture and language. In contrast, Chamoiseau's Créolité speaks of the need to create an identity by focusing on the present and the future, rather than self-defining on the basis of that of the country from which one's nation originated. In *Chronique des sept misères* although Pipi's encounter with the zombie Afoukal, an instance of magical realism in the text, it also symbolizes the tension between Créolité and

---

<sup>292</sup> Bernabé, Chamoiseau and Confiant, *Éloge de la créolité*, p. 26 (emphasis in original).

Négritude. This is because it is a reminder that whilst the past can provide wisdom based on historical events, there is nothing to be gained from persistently looking backwards. Glissant's movement beyond Négritude to Antillanité resituated the question of identity within the geographical context of the French Antilles and began addressing some of the concerns shared by the proponents of créolité, including,

décomposer ce que nous sommes tout en purifiant ce que nous sommes par l'expose en plein *soleil de la conscience* des mécanismes cachés de notre aliénation. Plonger dans notre singularité, l'investir de manière projective, rejoindre à fond ce que nous sommes...<sup>293</sup>

Yet, in a development of thought that ran as a precursor to Créolité's reclaiming of the Creole vernacular, Glissant reclaims the French language from the colonizer for the portrayal of Antillean culture. This acceptance of the different facets of their linguistic heritage is crucial for Antillanité and Créolité because, as Wing notes in the introduction to her translation of *Poetics of Relation*,

His [Glissant's] analysis of the problems in Martinique emphasizes the impact of widespread, active repression of those parts of the not-quite-lost-history considered shameful (where the mulatto elite is still more likely to hark back to some imagined Carib ancestor than to its African heritage). But though the first rupture with history occurred at the Middle Passage with the imposition of slavery and the French language, retrieving the history it-would-be-possible-to-know does not mean refusing the imposed French – now unquestionably part of what is sought in a quest for cultural self-definition. Utilization (outilization), tooling of the past to serve the present, is Glissant's work.<sup>294</sup>

The deep examination of, at once, the singularity and the commonality of their experience, the linguistic links of both French and Creole in terms of Martinique's oral storytelling traditions, and the connections that can therefore be drawn between inhabitants of the Antilles (and specifically Martinique) is fundamental to the concept of Créolité and Glissant's own theories, and this is

---

<sup>293</sup> Ibid. p. 22 (emphasis in original).

<sup>294</sup> Édouard Glissant, *Poetics of Relation*, trans. Betsy Wing (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1997), p. xvii.

reflected in the structure of *Chronique des sept misères* and *Solibo magnifique* in particular.

Interconnectivity also plays a crucial role in the linguistic construction of all three novels. As part of the Créolité manifesto, Chamoiseau, Confiant and Bernabé were insistent on the rehabilitation of the use of vernacular Creole into a plurilingual re-imagining of Antillean literature (or pre-literature as it was felt that at the time Antillean literature had not yet fully come into being). The desire to integrate Creole into written literature was significant and a fundamental part of créolité, as they sought to reverse the death of orality by forming a new literature. Moreover, moving Creole language use into what could be considered as more ‘mainstream’ forms of literature helped to firm up a concept of Creole identity. As Tcheuyap comments,

[...] the dispossession of language is fundamental in the process of alienation/disalienation. The recourse to Creole makes this language not a crutch, but the essential instrument for the reconstitution of a new being.<sup>295</sup>

The Creolists note that,

nous pourrons à travers le mariage de nos sens aiguisés procéder à l’insémination de la parole créole dans l’écrit neuf. Bref, *nous fabriquerons une littérature* qui ne déroge en rien aux exigences modernes de l’écrit tout en s’enracinant dans les configurations traditionnelles de notre oralité.<sup>296</sup>

The use of traditional storytelling techniques in new ways (both in terms of oral and written storytelling) allows Chamoiseau to highlight the relation between the orality of the past and the literature and oraliture of the present. Indeed, as Knepper posits,

---

<sup>295</sup> Alexie Tcheuyap, ‘Creole Mystification: Oral Writing in the Works of Patrick Chamoiseau and Simone Schwarz-Bart’, *Research in African Literatures*, 32.4, 2001, 44-60, p. 49.

<sup>296</sup> Bernabé, Chamoiseau and Confiant, *Éloge de la créolité*, p. 36 (emphasis in original).

by strategically reworking vernacular traditions (including storytelling and local language) and creolizing genres, Chamoiseau's interwoven novels explore past-present relations in a critical and productive manner while highlighting the dangers of nostalgic regression.<sup>297</sup>

However, caution is urged in describing these novels as 'Creole', particularly *Solibo magnifique*, because despite the symbolism of a Creole storyteller being strangled by a word, *Solibo magnifique* itself could not be considered a Creole novel, as the use of Creole fulfills a purpose, rather than forming the main point of the text. The Creole language throughout the text functions as synecdoche for an entire way of life that is now disappearing (traditional Creole language, culture and storytelling techniques) and requires urgent attention to prevent its complete eradication. As Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o comments in *Decolonizing the Mind*, 'written literature and orature are the main means by which a particular language transmits the images of the world contained in the culture it carries.'<sup>298</sup> Furthermore, Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o's emphasis on the inextricable links between culture and language, also serves to reinforce the bigger picture of the symbolism and impact of Solibo's death, as the death of the Martinican orality tradition, in the context of this novel, noting that, 'language as culture is the collective memory bank of a people's experience in history.'<sup>299</sup>

Therefore, the sparse use of Creole – mainly in dialogue and occasionally integrated into the text itself – has three main objectives. Firstly, it speaks about the members of society who struggle to find a foothold in the francophone *département* of Martinique. Secondly, it underscores the disconnect between the

---

<sup>297</sup> Knepper, *Patrick Chamoiseau*, pp. 60-61.

<sup>298</sup> Ngũgĩ Wa Thiong'o, *Decolonizing the Mind – the Politics of Language in African Culture* (London: James Curry, 1986), p. 15.

<sup>299</sup> Ibid.

severity of the French legal system, as deployed by the local policemen, that imposes a certain explanation on Solibo's death without paying attention to the cultural influences mentioned by the witnesses/suspects. This is because of their conflicting stories and inability to corroborate a full story about Solibo, who he actually was and where he came from (precisely because this was an impossible task, as nobody really knew anything of value about him). Thirdly, the use of Creole in the novel is an attempt to maintain a tradition of storytelling, which is in turn an attempt to keep alive the collective memory of the community for whom the stories are told and which is threatened by the growing influence of the French consumerist model of society.

The tension between the traditional and colonial, the Creole and the French in the novel, which in, '[Chamoiseau's] text reflects points at which Martinique becomes an intersection of the two,'<sup>300</sup> is also closely linked into the decline of the collective experience and the rise of individualism in Martinique. This is precipitated by the influence of French materialism on the islanders and is also explored in *Chronique* and *Texaco*, where the rise of consumerism destroys the collectivity of the marketplace and the djobbeurs' livelihoods and the French seek to destroy the collective experience of living in Texaco. It is perhaps ironic, although necessary, then, that the documentation of the literal and metaphorical death of the spoken word is captured and published by an ethnographer, who himself grapples with the difficulties of writing down oral tales and the qualities that would then be missing from the written accounts. Chamoiseau asks in *Solibo magnifique*,

---

<sup>300</sup> Chamoiseau, *Solibo magnificent*, trans. Réjouis and Vinokurov, p. 181.

[...] comment écrire la parole de Solibo? En relisant mes premières notes du temps où je le suivais au marché, je compris qu'écrire l'oral n'était qu'une trahison, on y perdait les intonations, les mimiques, la gestuelle du contour, et cela me paraissait d'autant plus impensable que Solibo, je le savais, y était hostile. Mais je me disais 'marqueur de paroles', dérisoire cueilleur de choses fuyantes, insaisissables, comme le coulis des cathédrales de vent.<sup>301</sup>

The use of Creole underscores the interdependency of languages on both a global and local scale, that Glissant notes,

[...] protège les parlers, du plus extensif au plus fragile. C'est au nom et en fonction de cette multiplicité totale, et non pas de pseudo-solidarités ponctuelles, qu'il faut défendre chaque langue.<sup>302</sup>

Moreover, the inclusion of Creole in a predominantly French language text, requires an element of intratextual and intertextual translation to allow for it to be fully integrated both into the text and the wider context of Caribbean literature. It also allows one a way to, 'comprendre l'autre, les autres, c'est accepter que la vérité d'ailleurs s'appose à la vérité d'ailleurs.'<sup>303</sup> By thinking about language in relation to one another and as co-dependent, Glissant encourages us to contemplate the necessity of a reconsideration of translation theory in terms of 'toutes ces coordonnées, de toutes ces relations, de tous ces entrelacs de la question des langues.'<sup>304</sup> Paul Bandia discusses this form of translation with reference to African storytelling traditions, but much can be applied to the Martinican cultural context, as he explains that,

Intercultural writing as translation is an attempt to recreate in a dominant colonizing language the life-world of the colonized. [...] [It] can be seen as a movement of resistance to the hegemony of the colonial language, an attempt to redress the power inequality that continues to assign a minority status or a peripheral role to postcolonial literatures in the global literary space. Writing orality in fiction implies a double movement from an oral tradition to a writing culture and from a peripheral colonized language to an imperial or colonial language.<sup>305</sup>

---

<sup>301</sup> Chamoiseau, *Solibo magnifique*, p. 225.

<sup>302</sup> Glissant, *Poétique de la relation*, p. 110.

<sup>303</sup> Glissant, *Introduction à une poétique du divers*, p. 44.

<sup>304</sup> Ibid.

<sup>305</sup> Bandia, *Translation as Reparation*, p.6.

Extrapolating the statement, ‘writing orality in fiction’ to include Creole and expressions of Creole culture, Bandia’s argument that the use of orality in literature is a way of staking a claim to that which the colonizer has previously appropriated is entirely applicable to the way in which Chamoiseau approaches the position of Creole in French language texts. The use of Creole in his work is not merely ornamental, nor does it add an element of local Martinican ‘flavour’, but pivotal in unsettling the French linguistic hegemony in Caribbean literature, representing Caribbean society and life as a whole. The translation in Chamoiseau’s texts, in terms of the movement of Creole from the oral to the written sphere, will be examined in the following section of the chapter.

The orality present in *Solibo magnifique* is translated into a form of oraliture in Chamoiseau’s writing, and the power that the storyteller holds is transferred to the ethnographer, the ‘marqueur de paroles’, with all the challenges that this may entail. Solibo tells his story in a particular moment, to the surrounding audience (including, supposedly, Chamoiseau himself), who are present and listening. No two stories will ever be exactly the same and the impermanence of his word and craft is emphasized by the fact we only hear about it in the retelling, via a written (and therefore permanent) account and from someone else. Therefore, as Solibo is ‘snickt’ (as Réjouis and Vinolurov translate ‘égorgette’) in the throat by the word and dies, he loses agency over his own tales and by extension his own life.

Consequently, Chamoiseau emphasizes the difficulties of transferring the tones and inferred meanings from an oral context into a written one, and is well aware of the betrayal that its translation into a written context may connote. At the

same time, he is convinced of the vital nature of the work – without it, the culture and history of these ‘choses fuyantes’ would disappear entirely. This is important, for as Catherine Wells explains, ‘ce narrateur extradiégétique sert non seulement de scripteur, mais aussi de traducteur-transformateur qui essaie d’incorporer la créolité de l’expression orale dans le français de la transcription.’<sup>306</sup> Chamoiseau’s complex relationship with *Solibo magnifique* as narrator and translator of the story into French, whilst at the same time claiming a status as impartial witness to the incidents as they unfold, allows us to consider him as the first translator of the work. By claiming to filter the experience through the eyes of the purported ethnographer, ‘le marqueur de paroles’, he is able to present the dialogue and the action as he sees fit, demonstrating the power and responsibility of his position from an interstitial viewpoint. This position of the cultural observer, who is at once inside and outside the culture, is unique. As Clifford states,

it poses questions at the boundaries of civilizations, cultures, classes, races and genders. [...] It describes processes of innovation and structuration, and is itself part of these processes.<sup>307</sup>

Being situated on the boundaries between French and Creole, the story and the representation of the story, Chamoiseau’s position as ‘le marqueur de paroles’ is one of shifting values across all three novels, which continually seeks to bring two *langues* into relation with one another in order to produce a new *langage* **between** French and Creole.<sup>308</sup> Indeed, as Britton notes, it is also possible to extrapolate out this position to that of the translation itself, as,

---

<sup>306</sup> Wells, *L’Oralité dans ‘Solibo magnifique’ de Patrick Chamoiseau*, pp. 102-103.

<sup>307</sup> *Writing Culture: The Poetics and Politics of Ethnography*, ed. by James Clifford and George E. Marcus (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1986), pp. 2-3.

<sup>308</sup> Here, I am using Celia Britton’s discussion of Glissant’s idea from her text, *Language and Literary Form in French Caribbean Writing* (Liverpool: University of Liverpool Press, 2014)



[it] can only work through the invention of a new *langage* that bridges the two *langues* but also produces something new and different from either of them: translation is thus by definition unpredictable.<sup>309</sup>

It is this creation, or possibility of creation, of a new *langage* in the space between the source and target language texts that is of interest in this section of the chapter, precisely because it is a practical application of Glissant's theory of relation in a framework of translation theory, mentioned at the beginning of this chapter. The fact that translation is referred to by Britton as a process which requires the creation of a new language in the interstitial space between the source and target language reinforces the notion of reciprocity and *métissage* of languages, which is contained within Glissant's theory of relation.

Chamoiseau's interest in mixing genres and styles is not limited to the text itself. The very construction of the novel also speaks of fluidity between commonly accepted genre boundaries, of historically factual text, ethnographic research and fictional novel. The novel contains an annex, which includes a newspaper article about the reconstruction of the marketplace at Fort de France, the identifying cries of each of the *djobbeurs* and finally a selection of short texts taken from the original novel. These paratextual materials build up the notion of the novel being ethnographically researched by Chamoiseau, and the blurring of boundaries between fact and fiction that this notion encourages. In introducing the 'paroles

---

that *langue* and *langage* differ in terms of their function for the speaker – *langue* functions more repository of materials with which one can construct *langage*. She writes, '[...] one of its main functions becomes that of relating one *langue* to another, breaking down their boundaries and so enabling them to be 'mixed up'. In this context it acts on the *structural* features of language; by its position so to speak *between* the speaking subject and the *langue* [...], it redefines *langue* as a resource or reservoir of materials rather than a structure; this in turn enables the subject to move between different *langues* and mix them up; and both of these factors have the effect of changing the *langue* itself, pushing at its boundaries.' (Britton, *Language and Literary Form in French Caribbean Writing*, p. 151) (emphasis in original).

<sup>309</sup> Britton, *Language and Literary Form in French Caribbean Writing*, p. 150.

de djobeurs' Chamoiseau reminds us of the role of memory in his work, and how the structure of the novel reflects this process which he describes as, 'fonctionnement jamais linéaire, tout en ruptures de temps, de lieux, de tons et de manières.'<sup>310</sup>

Whilst the disappearance of traditional storytelling culture and the Creole language played crucial roles in *Chronique des sept misères* and *Solibo magnifique*, Chamoiseau focuses on the (threat of) destruction on a physical space inhabited by society's liminal members in *Texaco* and the preservation of this social history by writing down the spoken stories of Marie-Sophie Laborieux's family. The liminal nature that the novel itself and the themes it explores occupy is also of direct importance to us in examining the text and text in translation.

Liminality is present in the in-between space that Chamoiseau inhabits as novelist and as 'word-scratcher'/'marqueur de paroles', the ethnographer. The position of Martinique, both geographically and culturally, in relation to France is brought into relief in *Texaco*, underscoring for us the neither entirely French, nor entirely Caribbean identity the island possessed at the time. As Claire Bisdorff notes in her discussion of French Caribbean 'prose d'idées' in translation, '[b]eing the Other within the Republic, Martinique is left with the impossible dilemma of being part of French aesthetic discourse, yet at the same time remaining the colonial Other to the white French intellectual elite.'<sup>311</sup>

---

<sup>310</sup> Chamoiseau, *Chronique des sept misères*, p. 247.

<sup>311</sup> Claire Bisdorff, 'French Caribbean "Prose d'idées" in Translation', *Interventions: International Journal of Postcolonial Studies*, 15.3 (2013) 332-348, p. 333.

Certainly, the act of translation is not clear-cut here either - intratextual translation occurs between the layers of the story, space, time and communication between Marie-Sophie, her father Esternome, the urban developer and the 'marqueur de paroles' whose notes and footnotes litter the text.

The movement between the different characters and narrative strands recalls the movement between the 'îles ouvertes'<sup>312</sup> of different linguistic regions and nationalities that Glissant describes as making up the archipelagic structure of relational thought and action. Each character remains distinct, with different viewpoints on the situation in Texaco (apart from the 'marqueur de paroles' who remains impassive), whilst at the same time connecting with others and contributing to a deepening understanding of what Texaco – and more broadly, a Creole identity – means. Expanding on this, the archipelagic structure is enlarged when translation is undertaken and this understanding of Creole identity can be shared not only with French speakers, but with an Anglophone audience, too. How sturdy the structure is depends on the awareness of the relation and interconnection of languages by the translator in their work. I therefore plan to interrogate the relationship between the writer, the characters and the translator, by examining how the translator responds to the shifts between the writer's different personae, the collective and individual identities of the characters and the plurilingualism inherent in the all three novels with the interplay between French and Creole.

---

<sup>312</sup> Glissant, *Introduction à une poétique du divers*, p. 44.

### ***Chronique des sept misères* – Translation analysis**

Linda Coverdale's translation of *Chronique des sept misères* was published under the title, *Chronicle of the Seven Sorrows* by the University of Nebraska Press in 1999. Despite *Chronique des sept misères* being Chamoiseau's first published work in 1986, its translation follows that of *Texaco* in 1997 and appears in the same year as that of *Solibo Magnificent* (both by Réjouis and Vinokurov). We can only assume that the translation of his Prix Goncourt winning novel, *Texaco*, piqued a Western Anglophone audience's interest in his work, leading to a greater demand for access to it in English. If this is the case, it is interesting to note the Western focus of the translations, as both were completed by American based translators (Rose-Myriam Réjouis is of Haitian origin, but resident in America at the time of translation), rather than presenting a text aimed towards the Anglophone population of the Caribbean. Furthermore, the choice of a university publishing house for the translation, rather than one considered perhaps more mainstream, may lead us to surmise that the popularity of his work still lay chiefly in an academic context and the rise in interest in studying what might loosely be termed 'world literature' could have contributed to the decision that this work was to be published, but principally for an American scholarly audience.<sup>313</sup>

---

<sup>313</sup> This is corroborated by the University of Nebraska Press website, where the description of their publishing activity is stated as follows, 'we primarily publish nonfiction books and scholarly journals, along with a few titles per season in contemporary and regional prose and poetry. On occasion, we reprint previously published fiction of established reputation, and we have several programs to publish literary works in translation. Through our Bison Books imprint we publish general-interest books about the American West. Our primary mission, defined by the University through the Press Advisory Board of faculty members working in concert with the Press, is to find, evaluate, and publish in the best fashion possible, serious works of nonfiction.' [http://www.nebraskapress.unl.edu/pages/about\\_general\\_info.aspx](http://www.nebraskapress.unl.edu/pages/about_general_info.aspx) (accessed 15.09.15). The University of Nebraska Press has also published numerous French Caribbean writers in translation, with the following as an example: Marysé Condé, *The Last of the African Kings*, trans. Richard Philcox (1997), *Land of Many Colors and Nanna-ya*, trans. Nicole Ball (1999),

On its publication, *Chronicle of the Seven Sorrows* received good reviews,<sup>314</sup> as evidenced on the back cover of the 1999 edition, where we can see the language in the text described as, ‘so gorgeous, so delectable that you will leave the book feeling slightly drunk’ and Chamoiseau’s storytelling as, ‘[conjuring] up the stories of the Caribbean without falling into folkloric condescension or obsessive local colour, refusing to be either anthropological or exotic’. Apart from a brief mention of Coverdale’s work as being ‘excellent’, the fact that this book is presented to the reviewers in a translated form is not mentioned in these four reviews (a common oversight – deliberate or otherwise – in reviews of translated literature), and by generalizing the book to being ‘of the Caribbean’, readers are left unaware of the importance of the cultural specificity of the novel. However, a degree of criticism is levelled at Coverdale’s translation strategy of using portmanteau words to deal with complex Creole words by Alberto Manguel in the *New York Times* review. He suggests that,

the mixture of Joycean portmanteau words, formal British language and African-American dialect (“You unmannersable stink-pig two-faced dog...are you gwine let my granddaughter be?”) somehow rings false and makes much of the narrative sound awkward, somewhere between “Masterpiece Theater” and Uncle Remus.<sup>315</sup>

The discordant tones that this translation strategy strikes, and to which Manguel refers here, will be examined later in this chapter.

---

Raphaël Confiant, *Mamzelle Dragonfly*, trans. Linda Coverdale (2001), Édouard Glissant, *Fourth Century*, trans. Betsy Wing (2001) and *The Overseer’s Cabin*, trans. Betsy Wing (2011), Gisèle Pineau, *Macadam Dreams*, trans. C. Dickson (2003).

<sup>314</sup> Indeed, both *Texaco* and *Chronicle of Seven Sorrows* received favourable reviews in mainstream press on their publication in translation. For example, in the *New York Times* review of *Chronicle* Alberto Manguel notes that, ‘Chamoiseau is such a remarkably original writer that even if the English translation does not do him justice, he should – he must – be read’. See the following *New York Times* reviews: Leonard Michaels, ‘Mother Tongues’ <https://www.nytimes.com/books/97/03/30/reviews/970330.30michaet.html> (accessed 06.04.16) and Alberto Manguel, ‘King of the Wheelbarrow’ <https://www.nytimes.com/books/00/01/16/reviews/000116.16manguet.html> (accessed 06.04.16).

<sup>315</sup> Ibid.

In translation, therefore, before we even consider the text itself, the paratextual materials of *Chronicle* (specifically the cover images and information) disrupt the particularity of the setting and focus of Chamoiseau's work and 'obscures the cultural specificity of Chamoiseau's texts while simultaneously plugging them into new networks of signification.'<sup>316</sup> Watts argues that the presentation of the paratexts of Chamoiseau's translated texts (both *Texaco* and *Chronicle* were initially published by American publishing houses, with Granta Books in London also publishing *Texaco*) to appeal an American readership transplants them irrevocably from the Martinican cultural context in three ways:

First, to confine the works to the eternal present of the colonial Caribbean; second, to disconnect them from their specific 'francophone' context; and third, related to the previous one, to privilege the affinities with writers from the nebulous category of World Literature.<sup>317</sup>

Watts notes that the shift from a particular cultural context to another is achieved visually in the case of *Chronique* with the use of a portion of a painting by Latortue, a Haitian painter, on the cover of *Chronicle of the Seven Sorrows* because the pastoral image plays into a foreign appreciation of what the 'eternal present of the colonial Caribbean' might be like. Furthermore, Watts also underscores the fact that coupled with the use of a Haitian painter's picture to illustrate the cover of *Chronicle*, the paratext does not emphasize Chamoiseau's connection to Martinique at all. He writes,

[...] concerning the secondary tendency of disconnecting Chamoiseau's works from the francophone context, there are few indications in the paratexts to Patrick Chamoiseau's translated works that he is a Martinican writer, a francophone writer, or even a writer whose works have gained their notoriety in part as a result of their transformation of standard French.<sup>318</sup>

The disconnect described here between the writer and his socio-cultural environment provoked by the images and information provided in the paratext of

---

<sup>316</sup> Richard Watts, *Packaging Post/Coloniality*, p. 162.

<sup>317</sup> Ibid.

<sup>318</sup> Ibid. p. 164.

the work does not just prevent the reader from fully grasping the provenance of it, but also the possibility to understand the book in terms of its relation to its specifically Martinican milieu. Removed from its particular sphere of influence, and placed within the framework of World Literature, alongside other ‘colonial’ writers who touch on similar issues as Chamoiseau in their own novels, *Chronicle of the Seven Sorrows* paradoxically loses the ability to act in relation to other literature. Watts argues the paratext of the translation, ‘[plugs] into the much broader web of signification that is World Literature, one in which otherness is always in play but often remains vague.’<sup>319</sup> In *Poétique de la relation*, Glissant warns of the dangers of the appropriation, or subsuming, of a smaller cultural identity by that of a dominant culture (he refers to France in the text, but in this case, it could be substituted for an American hegemonic view of Caribbean literature as being a homogenous group). He writes,

lorsqu’une culture expressément composite, comme la martiniquaise est touchée par une autre (la française) qui ‘entraîne’ dans sa composition et continue de la déterminer, non pas avec radicalité mais par une érosion assimilatrice, la violence de la réaction est discontinue, incertaine d’elle-même.<sup>320</sup>

Similarly, violence is committed, and the act of relation frustrated between the texts when the translation of the paratext places *Chronicle* in a cultural framework which privileges the needs of the (American) readership in relation to the text (by using a painting to illustrate the novel which locates it in an entirely ‘other’, yet still broadly Caribbean location) over the integrity of the text, and the relationship of the writer to it.

---

<sup>319</sup> Ibid. p. 168.

<sup>320</sup> Glissant, *Poétique de la relation*, p. 158.

This matters a great deal, because, as I have previously mentioned and will return to throughout this chapter, the cultural context of the novel affects one of the key concerns of much of Chamoiseau's writing, that of language and its use. By adopting the alter-ego of 'le marqueur de paroles' it is clear that Chamoiseau does not just see language as a functional tool for communication, but also a way to forge links between cultures and people, a form of resistance in terms of the language one chooses to use, a statement of identity and community and a means of holding a mirror up to and protesting the decline of a waning tradition. Words hold both iterative meaning and a connection to different timeframes, different modes of expression and physical spaces. He emphasizes this in *Écrire en pays dominé*, noting,

tout le monde hante ma parole, les fantômes caraïbes et les belles Arawaks, les esclaves dans leurs diversités, mais aussi les Maîtres, tout comme les immigrants qui débarquent chaque année. Moi, Conteur, je donne parole aux voix égarées. Mon corps se charge des gestes, des chants, des danses. J'appelle tambour, lui parle, et lui réponds, et tambour prend l'envol avec mes traînes de mots.<sup>321</sup>

Glissant sees Chamoiseau's use of both French and Creole together in the same text as a liberation of language, yet at the same time he urges caution in avoiding mixing languages in an unproductive way. It is perfectly acceptable to simultaneously move in and around many languages in literature, as long as one does so carefully and precisely. He notes,

Mais la pratique littéraire des langues est cela même qui permet de les libérer en nous; et si leur usage n'est pas innocent, du moins pouvons-nous prétendre aujourd'hui que leur fréquentation ne saurait être univoque. La passion du multilinguisme nous occupe. Cette passion ne signifie nullement que nous ayons à confondre une langue de toutes les langues possibles requiert avantage encore, en invention et en rigueur, de celui qui prétend à la poétique d'une entre elles.<sup>322</sup>

---

<sup>321</sup> Chamoiseau, *Écrire en pays dominé* (Paris: Éditions Gallimard, 1997), p. 169.

<sup>322</sup> Glissant, 'Un marqueur de paroles', p. 5.



Glissant's assertion here is all the more important when one considers the lack of a distinction drawn between the French 1986 text and the translation of 1999 in the reviews on the back cover of *Chronicle of Seven Sorrows*. It may initially be possible to consider the lack of distinction made between the source and translated text in the paratextual material of the translated text to be a meaningful manifestation of Relation in the context of translated literature, showing the two commingling in translation. However, the fact that the paratext places the translated text within a different framework of signification without permitting a meaningful connection to the source text shows that a relational appreciation of the relationship between the source and translated text to be difficult. This therefore frustrates the potential for a dialogue to take place between the texts.

In the translator's afterword, Linda Coverdale demonstrates her acute awareness of the multiplicity of languages at play in Chamoiseau's work, and recognizes the fact that he does not employ these languages in a conventionally 'bilingual' manner. She is aware of the importance of the novel in terms of its contribution to the collective memory of a particular section of Martinican society, and the fact that, not only does Chamoiseau wish to memorialize a particular social experience and moment in history, but also give a voice to the most socially marginalized so that, 'they may question this *Otherness* that has been imposed on them.'<sup>323</sup> The appreciation of what Chamoiseau had set out to achieve with the use of language in the novel clearly plays a large part in Coverdale's translation processes. Moreover, her attempt to convey the complex multilingualism of the text, and therefore, to enter into a dialogue with the source language text,

---

<sup>323</sup> Chamoiseau, *Chronicle of Seven Sorrows*, trans. Linda Coverdale, p. 213 (emphasis in original).

suggests a finished translated text which could work in a theory of translation that employs Glissant's theory of relation. That is, her translation, like Chamoiseau's original text, will be examined to determine the extent to which it could be described as 'une véritable opération de créolisation', which conveys a sense of the 'précieux métissage culturel'.<sup>324</sup>

In terms of sentence structure, and the construction of the text itself, Coverdale's work frequently closely resembles that of Chamoiseau. We can see this in her use of Creole in the text, accompanied by corresponding explanations in bracketed asides. For example, 'yin ki fanm, fanm ki an tijou mwen! (Je n'ai que des femmes aux trousses!)',<sup>325</sup> is translated as, 'yin ki fanm, fanm ki an tijou mwen! (I'm up to my neck in nothing but women!)',<sup>326</sup> and, '[...] man ni bel yanmes vini ouê mwen! (J'ai des belles ignames, venez me voir!)',<sup>327</sup> is translated as, '[...] man ni bel yanmes vini ouê mwen! (I've got some fine yams, come take a look-see!)',<sup>328</sup> By leaving these 'sound bites of Creole',<sup>329</sup> as Coverdale terms them, in the translated text, it initially appears that something of the original opacity of Chamoiseau's text is maintained in translation, allowing the translation to function as the bridge between both the French and Creole languages of the source text and the English of the translation. The point that Carol Gilogley makes with reference to Coverdale's translation of Chamoiseau's *Creole Folktales* regarding code-switching is also worth mentioning with reference to her translation of *Chronique*, because it,

---

<sup>324</sup> Glissant, *Introduction à une poétique du divers*, p. 46.

<sup>325</sup> Chamoiseau, *Chronique des sept misères*, p. 19.

<sup>326</sup> Chamoiseau, *Chronicle of Seven Sorrows*, trans. Linda Coverdale, p. 9.

<sup>327</sup> Chamoiseau, *Chronique des sept misères*, p. 20.

<sup>328</sup> Chamoiseau, *Chronicle of Seven Sorrows*, trans. Linda Coverdale, p. 21.

<sup>329</sup> *Ibid.* pp. 215-216.

reflects Créolité's relationship to the specificity of collective Antillean identity as much as it does the identity-split inherent in its ambivalent relationship with the *métropole*, and the Creolist doublethink which simultaneously embraces a closed identity and an all-encompassing hybridity.<sup>330</sup>

Maintaining a balance between the Creole and English translation, whilst bringing in some use of neologisms (which will be considered later) reinforces to the target language reader the fact that Chamoiseau wishes to resist the French linguistic and cultural hegemony. For him, literature is a place in which the heterogeneous nature of Martinican culture and society can be emphasized and examined.

Chamoiseau's texts are also known for their use of paratextual elements, such as footnotes and appendices to provide complex layers to a story, refusing a common linear storytelling arc. This technique serves to create a deeply opaque novel, blurring the lines between what can be considered fact and fiction in his work, with Chamoiseau himself as the writer/observer of the story balanced in a liminal position between the two. Asides and footnotes also enhance the sense that the novel is a work of ethnography, with the Creole folktales and myths that pepper the novel being collected from local people from whom this story is derived. Bearing all this in mind, it is noteworthy that Coverdale, 'with the author's permission [...] moved the material in his original footnotes either into the text itself (when it fits in gracefully) or to the notes (where it is marked with an asterisk).'<sup>331</sup> Divesting the novel of its original footnotes creates a much more linear, Western style of novel, and the fact that Chamoiseau sanctioned this change perhaps suggests his willingness to adapt his work to suit the

---

<sup>330</sup> Gilogley, 'Subverting Subversion?' in *Intimate Enemies*, ed. by Batchelor and Bisdorff, p. 174.

<sup>331</sup> Chamoiseau, *Chronicle of Seven Sorrows*, trans. Linda Coverdale, pp. 215-216.

expectations of target language readers. Yet, it also highlights, as Gilogley points out, ‘the propensity of the ‘enlightened’ West to seek definitive clarification [...] [with] the inclusion of annotated explications and glossaries, which goes to the heart of foreignization and translator visibility.’<sup>332</sup>

Although it can be argued that this loss of extra-textual material creates a greater transparency to the work (by creating a more structured reading experience), Coverdale balances it with the retention of Creole words and phrases, kept because they are,

either explained by the author himself, easily understood in their context, clarified by me with a descriptive word or two, twinned with their English meaning when they first appear (*manicou*-possum, for example), or explained in the notes I have provided.<sup>333</sup>

Her range of translation strategies to deal with the presence of Creole in the text demonstrates her attempts to, ‘respect the author’s desire not to see what he calls ‘shadow areas’ whited out by the rude glare of translation – while not leaving the reader floundering in the dark either.’<sup>334</sup> The relationship between the texts in her translation of the Creole terms exhibits characteristics of a translation which adheres to Glissant’s theory of relation because the translation does not attempt to universalize the language into a homogenous American English, or strip it of its particularism. The combination of English and ‘Creolized’ English terms in translation embodies Glissant’s description of the task as being, ‘art du croisement des métissages aspirant à la totalité-monde, art du vertige et de la

---

<sup>332</sup> Gilogley, ‘Subverting Subversion?’, pp. 171-172.

<sup>333</sup> Chamoiseau, *Chronicle of Seven Sorrows*, trans. Linda Coverdale, pp. 215-216.

<sup>334</sup> Ibid. p. 216.

salutaire errance,<sup>335</sup> and allows both sameness and difference to meet in a space of newness between the two languages.

However, Coverdale does not capitalize on this space of newness that translation can create between the two languages at work, creating rhizomatic links between them. Perhaps in order to mimic Chamoiseau's predilection for creating neologisms and a form of 'Freole' in his texts, Coverdale frequently creates and employs neologisms throughout the text. Rather than bringing the two languages closer together, this then often serves almost to infantilize the tone of dialogue between characters. The translation strategy is further problematized because the phrases that Coverdale modifies are often written in standard French in the source language text, rather than Creole, or Chamoiseau's 'Freole'. For example, the translation of 'les enfants ont faim tous les jours'<sup>336</sup> is, 'the children are hungry-tummy every day'.<sup>337</sup> The unnecessary tautology emphasizes a childish understanding of the problem and I would argue that it lessens the emotional impact upon the reader.

Notable other examples include, '[...] voir un dorlis en plein jour *n'était pas chose courante*',<sup>338</sup> translated as, '[...] to see a *dorlis* in the daytime was *monstropolous*'<sup>339</sup> and '[...] la rame se brisa sur sa *tête* comme sur du courbaril et n'eut pour seul effet que de lui faire tâter son *crâne* sanglant du petit doigt, dans

---

<sup>335</sup> Glissant, *Introduction à un poétique du divers*, p. 44.

<sup>336</sup> Chamoiseau, *Chronique des sept misères*, p. 197.

<sup>337</sup> Chamoiseau, *Chronicle of Seven Sorrows*, trans. Linda Coverdale, p. 140.

<sup>338</sup> Chamoiseau, *Chronique des sept misères*, p. 52 (my emphasis).

<sup>339</sup> Chamoiseau, *Chronicle of Seven Sorrows*, trans. Linda Coverdale, p. 34 (my emphasis on 'monstropolous', 'dorlis' emphasized in translated text).

une lente surprise’,<sup>340</sup> translated as, ‘[...] the oar snapped on his *noggin* as though dashed against a hardwood locust tree and only made him gingerly poke his bloody *pate* with his little finger, in slow surprise’.<sup>341</sup> Both of the above examples repeat the strategy of creating a neologism, or of using a more colloquial phrase to render a standard French word or phrase. Indeed, the source text is exemplary of a French literary style with the use of the *passé simple*, ‘se brisa’ and this mix of high and colloquial linguistic style is characteristic of Chamoiseau’s opacity in his style. In French, the action builds up to a sense of concussed shock at the end of the sentence, whereas the English use of ‘noggin’ and ‘pate’, both colloquial words for ‘head’ (with ‘noggin’ often being used in conversation with children), combined with the action of ‘gingerly’ poking his wound suggests rather the actions of someone unintelligent or childish.

This translation is particularly problematic given past Western opinions of black people as being intellectually inferior and less emotionally developed and sophisticated, and the translation risks giving these outdated and racist beliefs contemporary currency. It also damages the sense of linguistic hybridity because the literary point is made at the expense of the Creole element of the code-switching taking place in the novel. Moreover, it frustrates the possibility of a relational translation strategy coming into being because although in creating neologisms Coverdale is working in the interstitial spaces between the languages, she does so with an eye on the reception of the text in the target language culture, and privileges her own meaning of the words, over that which is implied in the source language text. Ultimately, rather than subverting the prevailing

---

<sup>340</sup> Chamoiseau, *Chronique des sept misères*, p. 65 (my emphasis).

<sup>341</sup> Chamoiseau, *Chronicle of Seven Sorrows*, trans. Linda Coverdale, p. 43 (my emphasis).

translation trends, Coverdale follows them. She does this by, ‘targeting the rich industrialized North rather than an Anglophone-Caribbean readership, whose culturo-linguistic isolation from their neighbouring islands might warrant the mediation of translation.’<sup>342</sup>

In so doing, Coverdale’s actions as a translator remain self-consciously visible, which coupled with the paratextual material, more often than not, denies the novel the linguistic hybridity it initially sought to promote and an opportunity to carefully move in and around languages, in the manner of ‘la nouvelle pensée archipélique’<sup>343</sup> that Glissant saw as so emblematic of translation’s growing role in the theory of relation.

### ***Solibo magnifique* – Translation analysis**

The English translation of *Solibo magnifique* was published in 1999 and was completed by the pair of translators (Rose-Maryiam Réjouis and Val Vinokurov) who were responsible for the 1997 translation of *Texaco*, also studied in this chapter. By and large, their translation strategy has varied very little from *Texaco* to *Solibo Magnificent*, as in the translator’s note they explain that, ‘generally, we have left Creole dialogue in the original, and unless the author provides a literal French translation, we footnote our own translations of the Creole.’<sup>344</sup> Here, they have left the Creole in the original style, as it is to be found in dialogue: ‘si tu avais connu l’Algérie, tu aurais vu qu’est-ce que c’est que quoi

---

<sup>342</sup> Gilogley, ‘Subverting Subversion?’, p. 163.

<sup>343</sup> Glissant, *Introduction à une poétique du divers*, p. 45.

<sup>344</sup> Réjouis and Vinokurov, Translator’s Note in Chamoiseau, *Solibo magnificent*, p. xi.

qu'est une bataille **éti moun ka senyen moun**, où cela saigne vraiment!...' <sup>345</sup> / 'If you'd been in Algeria, you'd know what a battle **éti moun ka senyen moun**, **where blood really flows**, looks like!...' <sup>346</sup>. In following example, we can see the use of a term to translate 'tout ça', which may prove to be more culturally relevant within the context of Martinican market workers. It is also an instance of the Creole translation into English being provided as a footnote: '[...] pourquoi tu me poses **tout ça** de questions? Ton nom c'est quoi? ...moi, c'est le Chef, envoie la grue de la fourrière é fouté mwen lapé! [...]' <sup>347</sup> This is translated as, '[...] why are you asking me this **bushel** of questions? Your name, what is it? Mine is the Chief, send the tow crane, and *é fouté mwen lapé!* [...]' <sup>348</sup> The footnote accompanying this translation tells us that *é fouté mwen lapé* means, 'get out of my hair' and it is 'a standard French expression translated into Creole.' <sup>349</sup> This use of Creole was not explained with a footnote in the source text, and this is likely to be because it sounds close to the French phrase it originated from, 'foutez moi la paix,' and therefore accessible for a francophone audience. For an Anglophone audience, however, this footnote can prove somewhat disruptive to the reading experience, because the sense of the outburst can be extrapolated from the context in which it appears and it must be considered alongside the rest of the paratextual information which originally appears in Chamoiseau's *Solibo magnifique*. Like other examples of Creole in

---

<sup>345</sup> Patrick Chamoiseau, *Solibo magnifique* (Paris: Éditions Gallimard, 1988), p. 121 (my emphasis).

<sup>346</sup> Chamoiseau, *Solibo Magnificent*, trans. Réjouis and Vinokurov, p. 78 (my emphasis, italics in original).

<sup>347</sup> Chamoiseau, *Solibo magnifique*, p. 140 (my emphasis).

<sup>348</sup> Chamoiseau, *Solibo Magnificent*, trans. Réjouis and Vinokurov, p. 93 (my emphasis, italics in original).

<sup>349</sup> Ibid.



the dialogue, it may have been more conducive to the reading experience to place the English translation alongside the Creole within the translated dialogue itself.

Réjouis notes the linguistic *métissage* at work in Chamoiseau's work in her translator's afterword, referring to the '*fréole*' (as coined by Pierre Pinalie-Dracius) he uses as, 'symbolic of his linguistic, psychological, and cultural situation as a French-educated Creolophone who writes in a language that most of his "compatriots" – be they French or Martinican – do not speak.'<sup>350</sup> Yet, whilst Réjouis acknowledges the risks that Chamoiseau takes in occupying this linguistic middle ground, she does not elaborate on how this impacts upon her own practice as translator. In fact, very little of the translator's afterword is concerned with specific lexical or textual questions relating to the challenges provoked by the context in which Chamoiseau writes and presents his work. She describes him as a writer who, '[...] cuts, irons, crumples, twists words to fit the order he wants to depict',<sup>351</sup> which is a vivid and accurate description of Chamoiseau's playful attitude towards words and their function. Yet she does so without providing examples of this from the text, or how they, as translators, approached these lexical modifications in translation. Despite the lack of explanation about how the translators dealt with a writer who displays such ease and freedom in manipulating two different language systems to his needs, they provided some creative solutions to linguistic challenges presented in *Solibo magnifique*, and these will be examined later in this chapter.

---

<sup>350</sup> Rose-Myriam Réjouis, Translator's Afterword 'Sublime Tumble', in Patrick Chamoiseau, *Solibo magnificent* (London: Granta Books, 1999), p. 183.

<sup>351</sup> Réjouis, Translator's Afterword in Chamoiseau, *Solibo magnificent*, p. 184.

The most we are explicitly told about their translation style (rather than the methodology behind it) is in the translator's note, which precedes the main body of the text. Similarly to their translation of *Texaco*, they create a glossary of unusual words used in the text, but also (perhaps more interestingly) in *Solibo magnificent*, 'the more colourful names are likewise glossed in the back of the book',<sup>352</sup> showing a growing complexity of their translation style, and, arguably, a tendency toward transparency in their target language text. These glossaries of both words and names (the presence and precise function of which are left unexplained by the translators) are unavailable in the French source language text, thereby leaving French readers without a precise understanding of the origins or meanings of Creole names or words (reminiscent of their work in *Texaco*). This oversupply of paratextual materials in the target language text therefore appears entirely extraneous to the target language reader's enjoyment of the text, and indeed, may actively impinge upon a reader's ability to concentrate on the story being told, with the result that this linguistic transparency may even subvert, or neutralize, the aims of the Créolité project.

In *Éloge de la Créolité*, Bernabé, Chamoiseau and Confiant set out to, '[rechercher] le maximum de communicabilité compatible avec l'expression extreme d'une particularité.'<sup>353</sup> They go on to state their aims more precisely,

notre plongée dans la Créolité ne sera pas incommunicable mais elle ne sera non plus pas totalement communicable. Elle le sera avec ses opacités, l'opacité que nous restituons aux processus de la communication entre les hommes.<sup>354</sup>

---

<sup>352</sup> Réjouis and Vinokurov, Translator's Note in Chamoiseau, *Solibo magnificent*, p. xi.

<sup>353</sup> Bernabé, Chamoiseau and Confiant, *Éloge de la Créolité*, pp. 52-53.

<sup>354</sup> Ibid.

By so clearly glossing many of the Creole elements of the text, the opacity central to the concept of Créolité and the theory of Relation is lost. Furthermore, even though the Creole phrases themselves remain in the text, the extent of the explication in the translation can at times over-clarify the text, therefore leaving little to the reader's imagination.

This is clear from Congo's impassioned speech, which in the source text is left untranslated, yet in the target language text, there is a footnote containing a translation of Congo's words. It reads as follows in the source text, 'une voix s'en indigna: Héli hanman mwen pou'y houê ha anka houê la-a?! Pon hespé alô?!... Bouaffesse sursauta.'<sup>355</sup> In the translation, we see the following, 'someone was indignant: *Héli hanman mwen pou'y houê ha anka houê la-a?! Pon hespé alô?!... Bouaffesse started.*'<sup>356</sup> Additionally, there is a footnote translating the Creole phrase uttered by Congo. This reads, '[And if my mama should see this now?! What about respect?].'<sup>357</sup> By drawing a distinction between the cultural and linguistic differences of the two languages in providing translation footnotes in the target language text, here at least, there is little opportunity for opacity or a new language being created in the space of encounter between the source and target language texts, as Britton posited there should be.<sup>358</sup>

Moreover, the entrenching of opposition, rather than a coming together of languages, is fundamentally opposed to the premises of the theory of Relation. In their over-determination of linguistic positions from outside the text, the

---

<sup>355</sup> Chamoiseau, *Solibo magnifique*, p. 101.

<sup>356</sup> Chamoiseau, *Solibo Magnificent*, trans. Réjouis and Vinokurov, pp. 63-64 (italics in original).

<sup>357</sup> Ibid. p. 64.

<sup>358</sup> See footnotes to pp. 147-148 of this thesis.

translators have missed the basic point of translation from the point of view of relation, and the beliefs of Chamoiseau himself, as he says, ‘the linguistic issues I explore [...] are no longer the ones of national languages confronting each other (i.e. Creole versus French), but of multiple languages co-existing within the same culture – the whole chaos of linguistic complexity we are entering.’<sup>359</sup> This is to say that gaps between languages are a reality, but that they can be reconnected rhizomatically in order to achieve a linguistic totality, which is neglected in the translation and explanation of details throughout *Solibo magnificent*, precisely because of the over-explanation often present in the translated text. As Glissant notes,

La pensée poétique, avant ou après l’accident du poème, ou par lui, tente de se constituer en système axiomatique: de mailler l’indémaillable. C’est là l’occasion d’une rencontre de type infini, où science et poésie s’équivalent. L’axiome est ici un fantasme fondateur, même s’il perpétue là en conquêtes de clartés. [...] L’axiome poétique, comme le mathématique, est éclairant, parce qu’il est fragile et incontournable, obscur et révélateur. Dans l’un et l’autre cas, le système ainsi pressenti accepte l’accident, comprend son dépassement à venir. [...] Il s’agit pour l’une et l’autre, non pas d’explorer: d’aller vers la totalité, irréalisable; sans avoir à dire où elles rejoindront l’une et l’autre – ni qu’elles en aient besoin.<sup>360</sup>

As I mention elsewhere in the chapter, comprehension of a text is not predicated on complete understanding of every word of a text but the overall sense and sounds that one gains from it. If we are to link languages in translation rhizomatically, that is, linking aspects of language together *through* translation itself, it is important not to over-explore one particular language, or aspect of the language, as that drives us further into it, to become rooted there, which is the opposite of the aims of relation.

---

<sup>359</sup> Patrick Chamoiseau and Janice Morgan, ‘Re-imagining Diversity and Connection in the Chaos World: An Interview with Patrick Chamoiseau’ in *Callaloo*, 31.2 (2008) 443-453, p. 448.

<sup>360</sup> Glissant, *Poétique de la relation*, p. 99.

Despite the challenges to the target language reader presented by the use of extra footnotes and translations, there are elements of the translation that work well alongside a Relation-based translation theory. One could argue that the ‘made-up’ English Creole style used in the translation of *Solibo magnificent* and the Creole inflections in the translated text conforms to this theory because it conveys the essence of the meaning and a localized accent, rather than each time conforming to a rigid rendering of precise lexical meaning. The change in spelling of ‘inspecteur’ in the text to ‘inspesteur’<sup>361</sup> and ‘inspectère’<sup>362</sup> in the speech of the local characters hints at their specific accents and intonations. It is rendered in the target language text as, conventionally, ‘inspector’<sup>363</sup> and also more unusually as, ‘inspekder’.<sup>364</sup> (Likewise, the Creole version of ‘si vous plaît’ is written variously as ‘souplé’<sup>365</sup> and ‘siouplaît’<sup>366</sup> and is usually translated as, ‘if-you-please’.<sup>367</sup>) Réjouis and Vinokurov excel at teasing out the lexical and emotional meaning of a word through its visual and aural translation. Here, they succeed in creating a language that is situated between the source and target language cultures, which allows a space of linguistic newness to flourish.

The self-evident surprise in the expressive phrase (a French rendering of a word of Creole origin, thus an example of *fréole*, or the *Chamoisification* of language), ‘j’étais estébécoué!’<sup>368</sup> is accurately conveyed with the exclamation, ‘I was s-t-u-

---

<sup>361</sup> Chamoiseau, *Solibo magnifique*, p.143.

<sup>362</sup> Ibid. p. 146.

<sup>363</sup> Chamoiseau, *Solibo Magnificent*, trans. Réjouis and Vinokurov, p. 95.

<sup>364</sup> Ibid. p. 97, pp. 115-116.

<sup>365</sup> Chamoiseau, *Solibo magnifique*, p. 91.

<sup>366</sup> Ibid. p. 95.

<sup>367</sup> Chamoiseau, *Solibo Magnificent*, trans. Réjouis and Vinokurov, p. 56 & 59.

<sup>368</sup> Chamoiseau, *Solibo magnifique*, p. 81.

n-n-e-d!’<sup>369</sup>, and a similar strategy is employed when translating, ‘[...] faisant sau-sauter nos coeurs...[...].’<sup>370</sup>, as, ‘[...] making our hearts j-j-jump...[...].’<sup>371</sup> Similarly, the laconic style in this extract of dialogue is conveyed appropriately in translation, ‘-Nooo, il disait: La missêrre dessine tous-sours délé mémé manière...-Elle dit que Solibo répétait: La misère dessine toujours de la même manière.’<sup>372</sup> In translation, ‘-Nooo, ‘e use to say: Meeserry draws ze saym way every weyer...-She said that all the time Solibo used to say: Misery draws them the same way everywhere.’<sup>373</sup>

These phrases are not ‘Creole’ but by playing with the sound and punctuation of English words, a Creole accent can be detected, without exoticizing or patronizing the original text and language. The rhythm of word choices can also emphasize a person’s own character or profession (much like the djobbers calls are contained within some of their nicknames in *Chronique des sept misères*). Sidonese’s request of, ‘vinaigre siouplaît, et trois clous de girofle merci beaucoup, un jus de citron ni trop jeune ni trop vieux siouplaît’<sup>374</sup> is melodically translated as, ‘vinegar if-you-please, and three cloves thank-you-much, juice from a lemon not too young and not too old if-you-please.’<sup>375</sup> Considering this translation within the framework of a Relation-based translation theory, it can be thought of as successful because through the in-between space of the two languages, we can glean something of the character of Sidonese in the way she speaks.

<sup>369</sup> Chamoiseau, *Solibo Magnificent*, trans. Réjouis and Vinokurov, p. 48.

<sup>370</sup> Chamoiseau, *Solibo magnifique*, p. 83.

<sup>371</sup> Chamoiseau, *Solibo Magnificent*, trans. Réjouis and Vinokurov, p. 49.

<sup>372</sup> Chamoiseau, *Solibo magnifique*, p. 176.

<sup>373</sup> Chamoiseau, *Solibo Magnificent*, trans. Réjouis and Vinokurov, pp. 120-121.

<sup>374</sup> Chamoiseau, *Solibo magnifique*, p. 126.

<sup>375</sup> Ibid. p. 82.

Whilst the focus of the story of *Solibo magnifique* is firmly on the physical death of the titular character, and the symbolic death of Martinican socio-cultural traditions that this presages, the translation – despite some occasional missteps – is concerned with into being a new form of language, created in the space between the source and target language texts. Although this language is not based in the oral storytelling tradition, it does bring the two languages of the written texts into a dialogue with one another, neither entirely effacing, nor entirely relying on either language. This, for Glissant, is the crux of translation as a means of Relation because it is an,

Art de la fugue d'une langue à l'autre, sans que la première s'efface et sans que la seconde renonce à se présenter. Mais aussi art de la fugue parce que chaque traduction aujourd'hui accompagne le réseau de toutes les traductions possibles de toute langue en toute langue.<sup>376</sup>

### ***Texaco* – Translation analysis**

The translators of *Texaco*, Rose-Myriam Réjouis and Val Vinokurov remind us in their translator's afterword that despite the opacity of the novel as a whole, the predominant use of French is because Chamoiseau intended his novel to be read as widely as possible within the Francophone world. Their attempts to render it comprehensible in English is only because, 'Chamoiseau is serious about being read by a broad group of people'<sup>377</sup> and, as they see it, it is therefore our responsibility as readers to reconcile the accessible language of a text to the sometimes inscrutable message that lies within.

---

<sup>376</sup> Glissant, *Introduction à une poétique du divers*, p.46.

<sup>377</sup> Rose-Myriam Réjouis, and Val Vinokurov, Translator's Afterword, in Patrick Chamoiseau, *Texaco* (London: Granta Books, 1997), p. 393.

However, in writing *Texaco*, Chamoiseau is proposing a new strategy for viewing the world, from the bottom of society upwards, and this refiguring of the literary and social norms should be reflected in the translation. Pépin and Confiant state that,

A traditional reading would have concluded that *Texaco* is an outgrowth of a marginal world, an unbearable outgrowth that should have been returned to urban norms based on Western concepts – in particular the fixed order where individualism blossoms and the Creole spirit is evacuated. Chamoiseau opposes this vision by unveiling the bottom layers, showing what is at work in the depths of this micro-society and how it uncovers and teaches us about our present historical adaptation: a nonitemized temporality [...], a new reading of historical filiations from the hills to the heart of the town.<sup>378</sup>

Therefore, the use of code switching between French and Creole without providing a glossary of terms is part of the deliberate strategy to disrupt accepted narrative structures, foregrounding experience from the ‘bottom’ of society upwards. This means that any unknown Creole term or phrase will remain so for a monolingual Francophone reader, unless they undertake their own lexical research. For example, the Creole phrase, ‘saki pa bon zwa pa pé bon pou kanna’<sup>379</sup> is not clarified in the phrase following it, ‘[...] ils avaient quand même commencé à comprendre [...]’.<sup>380</sup> However, at other times, a direct translation from the Creole into French is also provided within the text itself, with the Creole also italicized in the text, as follows, ‘*prédié ba papa’w ich mwen*, Prie pour ton papa, mon fils [...]’.<sup>381</sup> As Réjouis and Vinokurov say, Chamoiseau did intend for his book to be ‘readable’, given the emphasis on opacity in his theory and fiction, but considering the combination of French and Creole with no

---

<sup>378</sup> Ernest Pépin and Raphaël Confiant, ‘The Stakes of Créolité’, trans. Marie-Agnès Sourieau, in *Caribbean Creolization – Reflections on the Cultural Dynamics of Language, Literature, and Identity*, ed. by Kathleen M. Balutansky and Marie-Agnès Sourieau (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1998), pp. 96-100 (p. 99).

<sup>379</sup> Patrick Chamoiseau, *Texaco* (Paris: Gallimard, 1992), p. 123.

<sup>380</sup> Ibid. pp.123-124.

<sup>381</sup> Ibid. p. 53 (emphasis in original).



translation, it is unlikely that he always meant for it to be entirely comprehensible for a metropolitan audience.

The uncomfortable, or opaque, reading experience that a lack of complete understanding can create is important because it recalls and neatly reverses the disconnection experienced by Creole speakers in Martinique, faced with the demands of French-speaking *békés*. What is left untranslated in the source text is just as relevant and meaningful as what is explicitly stated. Here, Glissant's project of Relation is brought to mind, suggesting that the particular language spoken is almost not of relevance, rather, the value lies in how each language relates and speaks to each other. The translators have, for the most part, adhered to a similar strategy in their text, keeping the Creole as it appears in the source text, and translating the French explication that often appears alongside. For example, '*Prédié ba papa'w ich mwen*, Pray for your papa, my son [...]'<sup>382</sup> appears in a replica of the source text style, allowing the reader to gain a sense of the sound of Creole whilst understanding its meaning. However, as we saw in the examination of *Chronique des sept misères*, the translators employ a much greater degree of explication in their translation, adhering to their belief that they have not 'betrayed the original by actually making it readable when [the text] can strike so many as opaque.'<sup>383</sup>

Recalling the previous example of the use of Creole that has not been explained within the source language text, when we look at this phrase in the English

---

<sup>382</sup> Patrick Chamoiseau, *Texaco*, trans. Rose-Myriam Réjouis and Val Vinokurov (London: Granta Books, 1997), p. 38.

<sup>383</sup> Réjouis and Vinokurov, Translator's Afterword, in Chamoiseau, *Texaco*, p. 393.

translation, Réjouis and Vinokurov have provided greater clarification of the text, '[...] but (*saki pa bon pou zwa pa pé bon pou kanna*, food not fit for geese is not fit for ducks) [...].'<sup>384</sup> Whilst this translation makes explicit the Creole idiom in the source language text (which is not elaborated upon at all), '(saki pa bon pou zwa pa pé bon pou kanna)'<sup>385</sup>, allowing the reader to follow the text in its entirety, it must be emphasized that although 'readability' is key for Chamoiseau, this is not necessarily predicated on complete clarity in the text. Furthermore, this detailed explanation may end up serving precisely the opposite purpose of Chamoiseau's project of Créolité – the over-explanation creates a greater distance between the use of Creole and the English translation and a sense of exoticization regarding the Creole language use. The breaking down of the narrative's opacity (an important feature in Chamoiseau and Glissant's work, and indeed, recalling the oral storytelling traditions) reinforces a binary relationship between the source and target language text which foregrounds the needs of the target language readership and market. Consequently, the destruction of opacity and the opportunity for languages and cultures to mix and integrate, show the difficulties in Relation being able to properly take place in these translations. The extra explanation here is not an isolated example.

---

<sup>384</sup> Chamoiseau, *Texaco*, trans. Réjouis and Vinokurov, p. 93.

A similar example may be found later in the text (p. 105) when a similar strategy is employed a little further on in the text with a footnote accompanying the translation of the following sentence, '[à] ces impyok, il cria: *Fouté li kan en vil, pa menyen tè ankô, fouté li kan en vil*, Rejoignez l'En-ville, ne touchez plus à la terre pour personne, descendez vers l'En-ville...' (*Texaco* (1992: 138)) The translation is as follows, '[t]o these fuddled ones, he called out: *Fouté li kan en vil, pa menyen tè ankô, fouté li kan en vil*, Leave for City, don't touch the land for anyone again, leave for City...' (*Texaco* (1997: 105)). The Creole phrase is accompanied by a footnote explaining that it means, 'literally, "Get the fuck out to City, don't ever touch land again, get the fuck out to City"' (*Texaco* (1997:105)). The use of this footnote appears entirely unnecessary – either it could have been used in place of the sentence in the main text, as it would have adequately conveyed the emotion and force implied, or it should not have been included, as the explanation it provides seems to outweigh the interruption it causes to the flow of the text as a whole.

<sup>385</sup> Chamoiseau, *Texaco*, p. 123.

Further details clarifying a Creole term are sometimes included within the text itself, whilst others are contained in a footnote in square brackets to distinguish them from the author's own notes.<sup>386</sup> In one way, the translator's consistency of approach is clear, using these to ensure a 'readable' English language text. However, in over-compensating for complex lexical items in the text, the translators render the reading experience more fragmented and, rather than creating their own language in the uniqueness of both the source and target language texts and picking up the links between the languages, they set apart the English as distinct from the French and Creole. The translators' complex system is explained as follows,

In the original, the author's French translation usually follows any Creole sentence: wherever the author's translation diverges substantially from the meaning of the Creole, we have included our own footnoted version. We distinguish our footnotes from the author's by the use of brackets. Also, please note that an asterisk signifies the first appearance of a glossary item in the text.<sup>387</sup>

Whilst it is obviously not uncommon for translators to precede their work with a footnote concerning their methods, this translator's note reveals some important information about their perception of both the writer's work and their own task. Firstly, when the author's own French rendering of a Creole phrase seems too far from the original meaning, they consider it their own responsibility to 'correct' the French with their footnoted English translation. This is problematic because it implies a level of authority that the translator should be wary of assuming. Although the task of the translator can be considered as equal to that of the source language author, to include a clarification of a word or phrase – in their view – not properly elucidated, ironically both privileges and damages the target

---

<sup>386</sup> See for example, Texaco (translation) p. 14 where an additional footnote is included to explain their translation of 'nègre laïque' as 'lay blackman', p. 36 a footnote explaining the use and connotations of the term 'bête-longue', p. 63 an in-text translation of the Creole phrase 'ité za mété bwa'y opadèhiè kay la' explains its meaning in English. Similarly, on p. 166, extra information and a literal translation of the Creole phrase is provided in a footnote.

<sup>387</sup> Chamoiseau, *Texaco*, trans. Réjouis and Vinokurov, p. 1.

language audience's reading experience. Privileging, by ensuring complete clarity of expression and total understanding of the text; yet damaging, by allowing the target language audience to access certainly more meaning than the source language readership, and perhaps more than the writer himself may have intended. Secondly, the inclusion of extra footnotes and asterisks has an impact not only on the content of the novel but also on the physical way in which the book is read. The presence of more footnotes and the need to flip backward and forward to the glossary as asterisked words present themselves can be intrusive and – although the book is not known for the straightforward style in which it is written and this apparatus is already present in Chamoiseau's work – further interrupts the reading experience as likely intended by Chamoiseau. Finally, the three main modifications that the translators list in their note do not demonstrate, on their part, an understanding for the need for translation to be a process of dialogue or negation, and consequently, of relation. The focus of these translators in the note is that the target language reader, that is, the Anglo-American reader, is afforded as comprehensive a guide as possible to a text which is so situated in the place of the Other, in terms of both its non-linear style and physical location in the geopolitical situation in Texaco, Martinique.

Therefore, the frustration of the potential for linguistic interconnectivity necessary for Créolité in elements of this text demonstrates here a move toward privileging the reading experience of the Anglophone audience by the translators, over that of the source language text. It could even be charged with fashioning a

translation that maintains, ‘the asymmetrical relations of power that operate under colonialism.’<sup>388</sup>

Having examined some examples in which the needs of the target language text appear to override those of the source language writer and text, the ‘totalité’ of the relationship between languages appears diminished as the possibility of creating new branches of the network of linguistic exchange is stymied. This then prevents what Glissant saw as one of the fundamental purposes of translation, that, ‘chaque traduction aujourd’hui accompagne le réseau de toutes les traductions possibles de toute langue en toute langue.’<sup>389</sup>

Despite this however, there are also examples of renderings of the Creole language or culture in translation that merit attention. In describing some of Esternome’s business transactions, the narrator notes that, ‘[...] [il] leur livrait moyennant pas cher de petit très bien lisses [...]’<sup>390</sup>, which was translated as, ‘[...] [he] let them have for not-too-much smaller ones [planks] which were verrry smooth [...]’.<sup>391</sup> This translation effectively allows for interplay between languages, and indeed ‘chamoisifies’ English to vividly convey the meaning of the source text. The somewhat jarring word order of ‘not-too-much smaller [planks]’, without clear punctuation, recalls the Creole habit of creating compound nouns (using either two French words, or a French/Creole hybrid) and the use of ‘verrry’ spelt with three ‘r’s is a clever way to render the accent change (using an acute accent, rather than a grave), and thus pronunciation

---

<sup>388</sup> Niranjana, *Siting Translation: History, Post-Structuralism and the Colonial Context*, p.2.

<sup>389</sup> Glissant, *Introduction à une poétique du divers*, p. 46.

<sup>390</sup> Chamoiseau, *Texaco*, p. 108.

<sup>391</sup> Chamoiseau, *Texaco*, trans. Réjouis and Vinokurov, p. 81.

change in the spelling of ‘très’. These two very small lexical modifications adhere to both Glissant and Chamoiseau’s conception of languages as a living and developing entity – not working to the exclusion of any other (French or Creole) and underscoring the linguistic freedom and creativity of the writer, allowing him to mould it to suit a particular situation, or time.

The device of unusual word pairings is employed again to impart a certain Creole or Caribbean tone, which appears in the rendering of ‘mon Esternome n’était pas une clarté de cervelle.’<sup>392</sup> One might perhaps choose to translate this phrase as, ‘my Esternome wasn’t thinking straight’ but in this case, the translators used, ‘[...] Esternome did not have brainy clarity.’<sup>393</sup> Similarly, the translation of ‘une odeur de racines qui la précipita dans de petits vertiges’<sup>394</sup> as ‘a smell of roots rushed at her, giving her the dizzies’<sup>395</sup> conveys a conversational, storytelling tone despite the fact that the source extract employs standard French. The fact that these translations use English in a non-standard way pulls the tone of the text toward that of the conversational (a technique seen throughout the text), thus recalling the disappearing art of oral storytelling in a Creole context and its replacement by the written testimony and emphasizing a key theme to the text, and underlining the tension between the oral and written in Martinican culture. The three examples thereby demonstrate the relation between languages and the fact it is possible for translation to act as, ‘une véritable opération de créolisation, désormais une pratique nouvelle et imparable du précieux métissage culturel.’<sup>396</sup>

---

<sup>392</sup> Chamoiseau, *Texaco*, p. 100.

<sup>393</sup> Chamoiseau, *Texaco*, trans. Réjouis and Vinokurov, p. 75.

<sup>394</sup> Chamoiseau, *Texaco*, p. 58.

<sup>395</sup> Chamoiseau, *Texaco*, trans. Réjouis and Vinokurov, p. 42.

<sup>396</sup> Glissant, *Introduction à une poétique du divers*, p. 45.

## Conclusion

In the choices they have made, and which I have examined above, Réjouis and Vinokurov have remained faithful to ‘readability’ and point to the fact that Chamoiseau uses explanations and footnotes to clarify his text to support the inclusion of their own. For a work, however, that is described as Creole ‘only in spirit’<sup>397</sup> – undervaluing the role of Creole in the novel and within Martinican society more widely – and translated by people who claim to appreciate the ‘rapport between Martinican Creole and French in a Creole text with a French matrix’<sup>398</sup> the translation can, at times, veer from the source text to provide ever more explanation for the Anglo-American readership, fracturing the relationship between source and target language texts and preventing a true dialogue in the manner of relation materializing. In closing remarks which strike the reader as seeking absolution from a translation of a text which reject the possibility of dialogue between the two languages, the opportunity (as Glissant saw it) for the translator to create unique language, and the interconnectivity promoted by both relation and créolité, Réjouis closes the afterword thus: ‘[...] [we hoped to] rewrite the novel into an English at once supple and communicative of the spirit of Chamoiseau’s complex literary project. And here I have to stress the words *spirit* and *project*, because, just as it is true that the relationships between French and Creole are untranslatable, so are the particulars of genius.’<sup>399</sup>

Coverdale, too, attempts to foreground the creolity present in *Chronique des sept misères* and describes Chamoiseau’s writing as evoking, ‘the figure of the Creole storyteller, who even back in the dark heart of the slave plantations spoke words

---

<sup>397</sup> Chamoiseau, *Texaco*, trans. Réjouis and Vinokurov, p. 395.

<sup>398</sup> Ibid. p. 395.

<sup>399</sup> Ibid. p. 396 (emphasis in original).

of life to ward off the spiritual poisons of colonialism.’<sup>400</sup> She emphasizes the importance of bearing witness to Creole storytelling and local traditions and seeks to bring a sense of that Martinican particularism into her own translation. However, through the paratextual material, mimicking Chamoiseau’s style with her own use of neologisms and reworking of footnotes, Coverdale manages almost the opposite by writing a translation which points to the otherness of the characters, in such a way as to exoticize their lives.

Considering the chapter more broadly, it could be suggested that the translation strategy used here resembles Homi Bhabha’s theory of the ‘Third Space’ because ‘the production of meaning requires that these two places [in this case, the source and target language locations of the text to be translated] be mobilized in the passage through a Third Space, which represents both the general conditions of language and the specific implication of the utterance in a performative and institutional strategy of which it cannot ‘in itself’ be conscious.’<sup>401</sup> I, however, would argue that the concept of the Third Space, whilst drawing together the liminal from two linguistic spaces, is only a starting point for what Glissant’s theory of Relation clarifies in terms of translation. A third space of linguistic interaction and interconnectivity is indeed necessary for a productive and fair exchange between the two languages but must also consider the provenance and the destination of the texts. In so doing, the translator can confront and appreciate the uniqueness of each language, and that which he or she creates, finding ‘la totalité’ of languages through translation and confirming the position

---

<sup>400</sup> Chamoiseau, *Chronicle of Seven Sorrows*, trans. Linda Coverdale, p. 213.

<sup>401</sup> Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*, p. 53.



of translation as critical in assuring ‘la multiplicité de notre monde’<sup>402</sup> whilst maintaining the opacity in both the source and target language texts. As Bermann notes, it is necessary that, ‘the translator, like the writer, creates relations by forging a new language (*langage*) based on a respect for Otherness, and in dialogue with it. It is a language whose novelty and future cannot be foreseen.’<sup>403</sup>

In order to do this, as I have attempted to demonstrate in this chapter, it is necessary, when considering texts from a Caribbean background, to move away from translation theories which position the source and translated texts in binary opposition, thus preventing a dialogue or an intermingling of influences and refusing a sense of relation between the two texts. This is due in part to the different narrative techniques and multilingual approach employed in Caribbean texts, in comparison to many Western novels. In this chapter, I examined the possibility of using Glissant’s theory of relation as a different translation theory to explore three translations of Chamoiseau’s major novels, because of his emphasis on the opacity of literary works, and his belief that the act of translation could be a manifestation of relation itself. However, having applied the theory of Relation as a translation theory, I have found that the suggestiveness of the theory by Glissant himself makes it difficult to meaningfully piece together a practical application of it. The suggestiveness, rather than an explicit explanation of how the theory should play out, is typical of Glissant’s emphasis on opacity within the context of Caribbean and Creole literature. The use of it is

---

<sup>402</sup> Glissant, *Introduction à une poétique du Divers*, p. 45.

<sup>403</sup> Sandra Bermann, ‘Translation as Relation and Glissant’s work’, in *CLCWeb: Comparative Literature and Culture* 16.3 (2014), 1-9 (p. 7).

problematic is chiefly because it would involve negating the concept of source and target language texts, and a rewriting of translation as we understand it. Moreover, to talk about translation without accepted terminology problematizes the notion of the process of translation in its entirety, and this is an area that would require further examination. It is therefore possible that the ultimate aim of reading different language versions of the same texts, and analyzing them, could involve a relational reading between them, in order to show how the texts inter-relate and dialogue with the writer's wider oeuvre.

Therefore, considering the corpus of this chapter, it is worth turning our attention to the notion of ethnography as a form of translation. In all three novels, Chamoiseau as 'marqueur de paroles' is someone who translates dialogue from the oral context into the written. This role encompasses many forms of narrative, he controls what is said, and, to an extent, how the characters are perceived by the readership. It is possible to argue that the translator performs a similar ethnographic role in their transfer of meaning from one language to the next, influencing how a text is read and understood by the target language readership in the way they foreground or gloss over certain aspects of the text. The concept of ethnography as a form of translation, both in terms of auto-translation (i.e., a translation of what the writer chooses to present of themselves to the reader) and in the traditional sense of translation, will be examined more closely in Chapter 4.

## Chapter 4

### Mayotte Capécia and the Limits of Translation

#### Introduction

In this chapter we return to Martinique of the 1940s and 1950s, a timeframe Capécia shared with Fanon, but one which will be examined through the prism of a much more metaphorical appreciation of the term ‘translation’, marking a movement onward from Chapter 3. Approaching translation from a metaphorical perspective leads on directly from Chapter 3, in which we suggested more ‘elastic’ ways of approaching the study and application of translation and its theory, with the examination of Glissant’s theory of Relation as a translation theory. I would argue that viewing translation in a metaphorical way is most fruitful in relation to Capécia’s work, because it permits us to consider the various ways in which she, as a person, and also in her work, has been appropriated for the benefit of others, and how she consequently attempted to regain control of both her life and work.

Although much less well known than other Martinican women writers of her day, such as Michèle Lacroisil and Suzanne Césaire, returning now to the work of Mayotte Capécia and reading it in its own right allows us to approach the francophone postcolonial literary canon from a different perspective - one that has (up until now) been mediated principally through the male gaze, or the gaze of the Other. Despite Capécia having never claimed an ‘every(wo)man’ status, the experiences in her texts often speak of struggle, to which many women of her era and/or background could relate. In the context of this thesis, *Je suis*

*Martiniquaise* provides a vital counterpoint to the predominantly male-dominated francophone Caribbean literary world she inhabited,<sup>404</sup> and more broadly, a re-appreciation of Capécia's novels is of pressing importance, in order to read her work in, and of, itself, and not through the lens of a masculine criticism of it.

The focus of this chapter is an analysis of the metaphorical use of translation in both Capécia's life and work, in terms of how she chose to present her Self to the gaze of the Other; and this serves as a counterbalance to the emphasis on the literal translation of Fanon's work that we examined in Chapter 2 (despite the fact that Fanon's work, too, experiences modification at the hands of the translator/editor). Furthermore, her work still remains pertinent and demands reassessment, due to the continued relevance of the exploration of questions of race, class and gender in her novels that persist today. By exploring her life and work, we are able to continue to re-evaluate the criticisms Fanon brought about her in *Peau noire, masques blancs*, and to analyze the ethnographic potential of postcolonial writing shown in Chamoiseau's oeuvre in Chapter 3, in terms of Capécia's novel *Je suis Martiniquaise*. In so doing, we begin to reshape our understanding of Caribbean women's lives in relation to the *métropole* in a postcolonial context, and rethink our appreciation of the women in the francophone postcolonial canon, by bringing to the fore the work of a writer no

---

<sup>404</sup> Whilst fewer female francophone Caribbean writers were published, it is important to clarify that the cause of this disparity in their representation was principally due to the favouring of male writers within the French literary establishment at the time that Capécia was writing, rather than there existing no female writers. It is interesting, however, to note that amongst recent noteworthy female francophone Caribbean writers the vast majority come from, or have links to, Guadeloupe and Haiti (for example, Maryse Condé, Simone Schwarz-Bart, Gisèle Pineau and Edwige Danticat) and that most are born between 1950 and 1975. Significant literary contemporaries of Mayotte Capécia are Michèle Lacroisil (b. 1911) and Suzanne Césaire (b. 1915).

longer widely recognized, but who can still nevertheless shed light on current socio-cultural questions and the position of women in a patriarchal society.

The specific aim of this chapter is to examine the notion of translation in terms of self-reassessment and self-rewriting within the framework of both personal identity and written literature. Self-rewriting in this context will refer to the author's attempts to alter what self-image is presented through their work in order to modify the picture of their life in general. This will be achieved through an analysis of Mayotte Capécia's first of two novels, *Je suis Martiniquaise* (1948)<sup>405</sup> alongside relevant autobiographical details (the name 'Mayotte Capécia' was a pseudonym and many, but not all, aspects of her life were employed in her texts).<sup>406</sup> Thus, this chapter will explore possible reasons why Capécia might want to censor certain parts of her authentic self, including the notion that the translation of her whole identity into someone akin to 'la négresse blanche' might make her more readily acceptable to the Parisian society she encountered on her arrival from Martinique in 1946. It has also been posited that Capécia's work contains elements taken from the writings of a nineteenth century ethnographer and travel writer, Lafcadio Hearn, who spent two years from 1887 to 1889 in the French West Indies.<sup>407</sup> In this chapter I will also

---

<sup>405</sup> Capécia also published a second novel with Corrêa, *La Négrresse blanche* (1952), although this did not enjoy the same level of fame as *Je suis Martiniquaise*. It is partly for this reason, the infamy that this novel now endures because of Fanon's exploration of it in *Peau noire, masques blancs* and the fact that many of the issues found in *Je suis Martiniquaise* overlap with those of *La Négrresse blanche* (similar characters, use of Creole and exploitation of biographical details to furnish details of the novel) that it will not be examined in this chapter.

<sup>406</sup> Since 'Mayotte Capécia' is a pseudonym referring specifically to the author of *Je suis Martiniquaise*, I will use this name in relation to discussions of the text, and events pertaining to the publication of the text. In all other biographical instances I will use 'Lucette Céranus Combette' or 'Combette' to refer to the historical person who took the pseudonym of 'Mayotte Capécia' for the purposes of her literary career.

<sup>407</sup> See for further details: A. James Arnold, 'Frantz Fanon, Lafcadio Hearn et la supercherie de 'Mayotte Capécia'', *Revue de littérature comparée*, 302 (2002) 148-166 and Elizabeth Bisland,

consider the possibility of viewing Capécia's work through what could be termed an autoethnographic lens. That is, by frequently drawing on autobiographical detail, she also, perhaps inadvertently, provides a comment on contemporary French culture, gender relations, and those of Martinique, in terms of how she approaches writing her novels. The concept of autoethnography has been examined by Aedín Ní Loingsigh, who describes it, in the context of an analysis of Tété-Michel Kpomassie's text, *L'Africain du Groenland*, as, 'the manner in which Kpomassie emphasizes his own cultural background as much, if not more so than autobiographical facts.'<sup>408</sup> Françoise Lionnet also explores the concept of autoethnography in her work on female autobiographical writing and describes it as, 'the defining of one's subjective ethnicity as mediated through language, history, and ethnographic analysis.'<sup>409</sup> This chimes with the purported use of autobiographical detail to elucidate a particular moment in time in Martinican history in the novel. Indeed, in *Je suis Martiniquaise*, the cultural background and the autobiographical references take equal importance in the construction of the novel and the possible autoethnographic influences on this novel will be considered later in the chapter.

The examination of translation in this chapter will be underpinned by a detailed reading of *Je suis Martiniquaise* and a methodology which looks beyond a translation theory which relies on a dialogue, or exchange, between a source and target language text, to a concept of translation in terms of a transformation of

---

*The Life and Letters of Lafcadio Hearn* (Boston and New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1906) for further details about Hearn.

<sup>408</sup> Aedín Ní Loingsigh, *Postcolonial Eyes: Intercontinental Travel in Francophone African Literature* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2009), p. 129.

<sup>409</sup> Lionnet, *Autobiographical Voices*, p. 99.

(personal) characteristics, through the literal act of rewriting. I shall draw upon Bourdieu's concept of 'social habitus', a notion closely linked with social and cultural expectations which people naturally embody when brought up with, or deeply familiar with them. However, one's habitus can change, and the skills which one has developed in one socio-cultural situation may not necessarily be useful elsewhere, forcing one to consciously adapt to the circumstances. According to John B. Thompson in *Language and Symbolic Power* Bourdieu's use of the term habitus is very specific and refers to,

a set of dispositions which incline agents to act and react in certain ways. The dispositions generate practices, perceptions and attitudes which are "regular" without being consciously co-ordinated or governed by any "rule". [...] [It] provides individuals with a sense of how to act and respond in the course of their daily lives. It "orients" their actions and inclinations without strictly determining them. It gives them a "feel for the game" ['game' being one of the terms Bourdieu uses to describe the circumstances within which one operates. He also makes use of the term 'field' (champ) and 'market'], a sense of what is appropriate in the circumstances and what is not, a "practical sense" (*le sens pratique*). [...] when individuals act, they always do so in specific social contexts or settings. Hence particular practices or perceptions should be seen, not as the product of the habitus as such, but as the product of the *relation between* the habitus, on the one hand, and the specific social contexts or "fields" within which individuals act, on the other.<sup>410</sup>

This theoretical determination of the socio-cultural space one inhabits will be particularly pertinent in the discussion of Mayotte Capécia's questioning of identity and belonging in her novels, especially considering the extent to which she adapted herself to her circumstances and surroundings. 'Habitus' will therefore be used to elucidate why it might have been that Combette felt she must translate herself into 'Mayotte Capécia' and modify her projected self to fit into the Parisian society that she eventually inhabited.

---

<sup>410</sup> John B. Thompson (ed.) in Pierre Bourdieu, *Language and Symbolic Power*, trans. Gino Raymond and Matthew Adamson (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1997), pp. 12-13.

Connected to this, I shall also refer to de Certeau's concept of 'débrouillardise', which puts forward the notion of resistance from inside the oppressive system (which it could be argued that Capécia manages to achieve) to support my argument in rebuttal of Fanon's criticisms of her, that her behaviour in taking a white lover was not an act of 'inauthenticity' and 'bad faith'. Richard D.E Burton describes *débrouillardise* as,

the strength of the weak, the only way in which the chronically disempowered can survive and turn the system that oppresses them against itself and use it to their own advantage [...]. De Certeau argues that a given socio-political system can be *resisted* only when it is possible for the dominated group or for dominated individuals to place themselves entirely outside the system in question. Resistance requires an "elsewhere" from which the system may be perceived and grasped as a whole and from which a coherent *strategy* of resistance may be elaborated. Opposition, on the other hand, has no space which it can properly call its own. It takes place of necessity within the system, on ground defined by the system, and, in the absence of any concerted strategy of resistance [...].<sup>411</sup>

By employing this concept, I plan to assert the necessity of her actions in order to assure – as far as possible – the safety and wellbeing of herself and her children. This all being considered, it is important to examine the manner in which Mayotte Capécia's text has been appropriated to support various literary and critical agendas since its publication and at times, these agendas have been directly contradictory. Her work has continually been read through the lens of another argument, whether of Fanon, feminist critics or her own translator, rather than in and of itself. I would argue that in constantly being subject to and of other projects it becomes much harder to discern Capécia within the novel, and her own influence on the text. Bearing all this in mind and drawing these strands together, I would like to widen the argument to broadly assess the overall limits of translation – what can be considered translation and what does this involve?

---

<sup>411</sup> Richard D.E. Burton, 'Debrouya Pa Peche, Or Il y a Toujours Moyen De Moyenner: Patterns of Opposition in the Fiction of Patrick Chamoiseau', *Callaloo*, 16.2 (Spring 1993), 466-481 (p. 468) (emphasis in original).



Lucette Céranus and her twin sister Reine were born in Grand'Anse, Martinique, on 17 February 1916. Their mother was poor and worked as a 'ménagère'. She was also illiterate and unable to sign her name on their birth certificates. Their father, Marie Eugène Stanislas Combette, was absent from a good part of their lives, having married someone else after the birth of the twins and starting his 'own' family with her. Yet, Lucette took his surname for her own, becoming Lucette Céranus Combette, just before leaving Martinique after her father's death in 1945. As Cottias and Dobie note, 'il semblerait que la reconnaissance ait eu une importance symbolique alors que Lucette qui était sur le point de quitter la Martinique pour se marier'<sup>412</sup> (a marriage which never took place).

The family's life was hard and they moved between Fort-de-France and le Carbet so that their mother could find work. The resilience and tenacity required to survive was instilled in the girls at an early age. When their mother died in 1929, their father offered the twins a home with him, but they turned him down and returned to Fort-de-France where, at the age of thirteen, Combette began work in a chocolate factory, cutting short her education. At the age of seventeen, she had a relationship with a béké and gave birth to her first child. Cottias and Dobie explain that, 'faisant preuve de résilience et d'ambition, elle travaille comme couturière puis fonde son propre négoce: une épicerie combinée à une blanchisserie (un choix de métier que Fanon interprétera comme un symptôme de

---

<sup>412</sup> Myriam Cottias and Madeleine Dobie, *Relire Mayotte Capécia: Une femme des Antilles dans l'espace colonial français (1916 – 1955)*, 'Je suis Martiniquaise' et 'La Négrresse blanche' (*Textes intégraux*) (Paris: Armand Collin, 2012), p. 31.

son complexe de lactification).’<sup>413</sup> She then had a second child with a Syrian shopkeeper, who she left, ‘à cause de ses infidélités supposées.’<sup>414</sup> Her perception of men, shaped through these formative experiences (and, most particularly, the relationship which produced her third child) strongly informs the relationships described in *Je suis Martiniquaise* and the overall depiction of the majority of men as feckless, unfaithful and unreliable (except, perhaps, with the exception of Pascal, Isaure’s husband in *La Négrresse blanche*). The men’s unreliability is underscored when contrasted with the industriousness, and instincts of *débrouillardise* that Combette demonstrates by leaving her education behind to begin working, and by starting up her own shop and laundry business.

Her third and, perhaps, most important relationship in terms of her future literary success, took place during the occupation of Martinique by the Vichy military in World War Two. It was with a French Pétainist naval lieutenant, who provided the inspiration for the characters named ‘André’ in *Je suis Martiniquaise* and ‘du Taillant’ in *La Négrresse blanche*. This relationship, which lasted two years and produced her third and youngest child, Claude, ended with the lieutenant’s redeployment to North Africa in 1943. However, from 1943 to 1945, he undertook the extraordinary practice of writing down their affair together and posting it to her, chapter by chapter, pages numbered and complete with a contents page. By the time he had finished, ‘le mémoire de l’officier, qui porte le titre *Dieu est amour*, compte quelque 299 pages numérotées’,<sup>415</sup> which would become the basis of much of *Je suis Martiniquaise*, her first novel.

---

<sup>413</sup> Cottias and Dobie, *Relire Mayotte Capécia*, p. 16. I will engage more closely with Fanon’s *Peau noire, masques blancs* in the next section of this chapter.

<sup>414</sup> Ibid.

<sup>415</sup> Ibid. p. 17.

Following the end of this relationship, Combette moved to Paris in 1946 and having settled there, she would only return to Martinique once more to fetch her children in the spring of 1948. She worked variously as a seamstress and a cook, and her situation in Paris was at times difficult (she and her family were once evicted from their flat). It was here that she made the acquaintance of Edmond Buchet, which, in her detailed biography of Capécia, Makward suggests occurred because ‘elle fut remarquée par un ami de la maison’<sup>416</sup> in Paris where she worked as a cook following her arrival from Martinique. In 1930 Buchet was appointed commercial director at Corrêa publishing house, alongside Jean Chastel who oversaw manufacturing. By the 1950s, the name of the company had been changed to Buchet-Chastel. Buchet was an important figure in the publishing house who maintained a balance between publishing established writers and supporting newer authors.

[...] Edmond Buchet a également été à l’origine des premières publications d’auteurs aussi différents que Maurice Sachs, Michèle Bernstein, Evelyne Mahyère ou Maria Le Hardouin (Prix Femina 1949), tout en se réservant le privilège de publier des textes inédits de Gustave Flaubert. Homme d’affaires avisé, il sait repérer les best-sellers, tel *Vivez jeune, vivez longtemps* de Gayelord Hauser (1958) et, parallèlement, apprécier l’évolution des mentalités, comme en témoigne la relation de confiance le liant à Guy Debord, qui publie chez lui *La Société du spectacle* en 1967.<sup>417</sup>

It was because of him that *Je suis Martiniquaise* (1948) and *La Négrresse blanche* (1950) were published, under her pseudonym of Mayotte Capécia.<sup>418</sup> Although *Je suis Martiniquaise* was critically acclaimed, winning Le Grand Prix de

---

<sup>416</sup> Christiane P. Makward, *Mayotte Capécia ou l’aliénation selon Fanon* (Paris: Éditions Karthala, 1999), pp. 117-118.

<sup>417</sup> André Derval, ‘Les éditions Buchet-Chastel’, *Les Carnets de l’IMEC*, No. 1, (Printemps 2014) 30-31, (p. 30).

<sup>418</sup> Makward describes this name as, ‘pseudonym d’une parfaite inconnue’ (1999: 16).

Littérature des Antilles in 1949,<sup>419</sup> *La Négrresse blanche* did not enjoy quite the same level of success. The text was published in 1948 in Paris, in an atmosphere of ‘libéralisme assimilationiste’<sup>420</sup> and, at the end of 1948, it was reviewed in *Présence Africaine* 5 by Jenny Alpha, a fellow Martinican writer. *Présence Africaine* sought to interrogate the position of African culture and literature in relation to the Western space and, ‘in fact, it belongs to that space, though it is true that from the beginning *Présence* defined itself on the margin of this centre it challenged.’<sup>421</sup> The journal highlighted the fact that in creating literature or art that promoted a message of anti-conformity, writers and artists had to colonize Western artistic forms and languages in order to successfully do so on a wider scale. A review of *Je suis Martiniquaise* fits within *Présence Africaine* because, at the time, it was a meaningful appropriation of the French language to describe the life of a colonized Martinican woman, bringing to the fore a story which would previously have remained on the margins of the French metropolitan consciousness. In it, however, Alpha scratched only the surface of the hybrid identity of the text in her criticism of the novel’s culturally inauthentic language. She referred to this problem as, ‘ce qui me trouble le plus dans ce livre’ because, ‘les héros de Mayotte Capécia ne parlent pas toujours le vrai langage de notre île’, which she felt, ‘confère à ce témoignage intéressant par d’autres côtés une certaine atmosphère Baedeker.’<sup>422</sup>

---

<sup>419</sup> The award was in its third year when it was awarded to *Je suis Martiniquaise*, and was worth 35 000 Francs. Other recipients of this award include Raphaël Tardon in 1948 and Gilbert Gratiant in 1965.

<sup>420</sup> Makward, *Mayotte Capécia*, p. 26.

<sup>421</sup> Valentin Y. Mudimbe, ‘The Surreptitious Speech’, in *The Short Century: Independence and Liberation Movements in Africa 1945-1994*, ed. by Okwui Enwezor (Munich, London and New York: Prestel, 2001), pp. 17-21 (p. 17).

<sup>422</sup> Jenny Alpha quoted in Makward, *Mayotte Capécia*, p. 39.

Questions surrounding the true identity of the author of *Je suis Martiniquaise* were left unexamined until the late 1990s and Capécia is now perhaps best known for the scathing criticism she and *Je suis Martiniquaise* endured at the pen of Frantz Fanon in *Peau noire, masques blancs* (1952).<sup>423</sup> Here, he famously attacked her and *Je suis Martiniquaise* as, ‘un ouvrage au rabais, prônant un comportement malsain.’<sup>424</sup> This is because of his Sartrean belief that she led an inauthentic life of ‘mauvaise foi’, which Macey explains with reference to Mayotte Capécia as,

a form of self-deception, a denial of human freedom and an abdication of responsibility towards oneself and others. The repeated, ‘I know [that is impossible]’ that Mayotte appends to her wish to marry a white man is the index of her bad faith and of her inability to be what Heidegger would call ‘resolute’ or what Sartre calls ‘authentic’ [...].<sup>425</sup>

For Fanon, Capécia’s purported desire to be loved by a white man allows her existence to be valorized and normalized, ‘Mayotte aime un Blanc dont elle accepte tout. C’est le seigneur. Elle ne réclame rien, n’exige rien, sinon un peu de blancheur dans sa vie.’<sup>426</sup>

David Macey, writing in *Frantz Fanon: A Life*, suggested that, ‘it would be difficult indeed to turn Fanon into a feminist or even a pro-feminist by the standards of the 1990s, but it is equally difficult to see Capécia’s heroines as feminine icons of exploited womanhood and, by Martinican standards, she is not ‘working-class.’<sup>427</sup> Although it is true that the female protagonists in Capécia’s texts could hardly be described as ‘exploited’, Macey takes the fact that

---

<sup>423</sup> Fanon’s criticism of Capécia and her work will be closely examined in this chapter.

<sup>424</sup> Fanon, *Peau noire, masques blancs*, p. 34.

<sup>425</sup> Macey, *Frantz Fanon*, p. 177.

<sup>426</sup> Fanon, *Peau noire, masques blancs*, p. 34.

<sup>427</sup> Macey, *Frantz Fanon*, p. 173.

Combette ran her own shop and laundry service and that her sister owned a bar in Fort-de-France as proof of the fact that they were not to be considered working-class. Indeed, it is true that their businesses were relatively successful. Her rented living arrangements from 1937 until her departure for France in 1946 were not insubstantial; ‘elle comportait un magasin au rez-de-chaussée et deux pièces à l’étage, une cour avec fontaine et plantes, et enfin une cuisine et des chambres de domestiques à l’arrière.’<sup>428</sup> However, this is relative to the conditions in which she lived in Martinique, and those of her new life in Paris, and Macey is mistaken in claiming that Combette was definitely not ‘working-class’, given her upbringing and the fact she sought paid employment at the age of only thirteen. Makward clearly outlines the stifling constraints (her class, her gender and her colour) on her ambition, which makes Combette’s self-improvement and eventual fame as a writer all the more remarkable. Makward writes,

le triple handicap de Lucette Combette, née Céranus, dite Mayotte Capécia, si on veut le hiérarchiser, fut d’abord pour Mayotte la classe. Elle était plus que pauvre, démunie et illégitime; peu encline à l’étude, elle fut ensuite privée d’éducation jusqu’à ce qu’elle entreprenne, à l’âge de trente ans, d’apprendre *vraiment* à écrire. Son sexe et sa foi religieuse furent la seconde limitation de son destin: mère à dix-sept ans, elle était théoriquement née pour servir les hommes, père, mari ou amants et elle donna naissance quatre fois. [...] Son métissage, l’existence d’une jumelle identique, sa beauté surtout furent la chance de se dégager des couches populaires martiniquaises auxquelles sa naissance la vouait. Mais ce métissage fut aussi une infortune car ses sentiments les plus négatifs ne la trompaient guère à l’époque de la formation de son identité, dans les années trente.<sup>429</sup>

It is through Reine’s bar that the sisters made the acquaintance of many Frenchmen, stationed in Martinique during World War Two, and, in particular, the naval lieutenant with whom Combette had an affair. A relationship with a white man was a status symbol in contemporary Martinique, and, as has been

<sup>428</sup> Makward, *Mayotte Capécia*, p.100.

<sup>429</sup> Ibid. pp. 210-211 (emphasis in original).

demonstrated widely in French Caribbean fiction by writers such as Condé and Chamoiseau, ‘liaisons with powerful white men constituted a means by which they might advance themselves, their children and families, and were therefore not always unwelcome.’<sup>430</sup> Whilst she may not necessarily have been termed ‘working-class’ in Martinique, (indeed, she and her sister had wide-ranging business plans, which included opening a hotel but, ‘le tourisme, tout comme leurs finances, était encore très peu développé’<sup>431</sup>), the questions of race and class loomed large in the background in her attempts to move up the social ladder, especially on her arrival in Paris.

Race and class will play a significant role in my analysis of Combette’s translation of her Self post-1946 into the figure of Mayotte Capécia, her departure from Martinique and the start of her Parisian literary career. These questions were likely to have returned to the fore when she arrived in Paris, at a time when immigration from French Caribbean DOMs was increasing and when the financial situation of the family was, at times, precarious. Certainly, this is a theme in *Je suis Martiniquaise* and mirrors Combette’s desire to improve her social status, and by extension, that of her children, through these relationships. The novels highlight the futility of these efforts, and the inevitability of their failure as the women are eventually left alone, either through death or abandonment, suggesting that the coveted white men are as unreliable as the black men they avoid.

---

<sup>430</sup> Susan Z. Andrade, ‘The Nigger of the Narcissist: History, Sexuality and Intertextuality in Marysé Condé’s Heremakhonon’, *Callaloo*, 16.1 (Winter 1993), 213-226, (p. 215).

<sup>431</sup> Makward, *Mayotte Capécia*, p. 101.

In 1955, Lucette Céranus Combette died of cancer at the age of 39 in Paris.<sup>432</sup> Since then, Mayotte Capécia's readers have been mostly those whose curiosity has been piqued by Fanon's words in *Peau noire, masques blancs* which have maintained her fame, or rather, infamy. Macey scathingly notes that, 'were it not for Fanon's very harsh criticism of her work, it is, paradoxically, unlikely that the microfiche copies in the Bibliothèque Nationale de France would find many contemporary readers.'<sup>433</sup> However, the tide of interest in Mayotte Capécia is now changing. Due to growing scholarship and revalorization of her life and work, the broader understanding of Capécia is shifting. Her writing is no longer viewed primarily as an example of bad faith and an inauthentic life, but is being re-assessed as apparently demonstrating, with simplicity and clarity, the experience as a woman in postcolonial Martinique. She may not be representative of the majority of Martinican women's experiences, and the conditions under which the texts were written have been subject to much scrutiny, but the autoethnographic essence (that is, by using elements of her own autobiography in her texts, she also speaks of the contemporary Martinican socio-cultural context) of what was written is still often considered to speak for the underrepresented, female members of Martinican society and their lives. The change in perception of Capécia's work can be gauged through other Caribbean (female) writers' reactions to it, and for Maryse Condé, *Je suis Martiniquaise*, in particular, is a text of immense importance. She describes it as, '[...] a precious written testimony, the only one we possess, of the mentality of a West Indian girl

---

<sup>432</sup> Detailed accounts of Mayotte Capécia's biography may be found in Myriam Cottias and Madeleine Dobie, *Relire Mayotte Capécia: Une femme des Antilles dans l'espace colonial français (1916 – 1955)*, 'Je suis Martiniquaise' et 'La Nègresse blanche' (Textes intégraux) (Paris: Armand Collin, 2012), pp. 14 – 19 and Christiane P. Makward, *Mayotte Capécia, ou l'Aliénation selon Fanon* (Paris: Éditions Karthala, 1999), pp. 93 – 129.

<sup>433</sup> Macey, *Frantz Fanon*, p. 169.



in those days, of the impossibility of her to build up an aesthetics which would enable her to come to terms with the colour of her skin.’<sup>434</sup> Whilst this chapter seeks to draw together recent Capécia scholarship and to use it to support an analysis of her life and work, it will also seek to assess how much of the ‘real’ Capécia is to be found in her writing, and the extent to which the novel can be considered a manifestation of her will for self-improvement and revalorization.

Firstly, it is essential to clarify what I mean by ‘self-translation’ in the context of this chapter. Ordinarily, as Grutman notes, self-translators are,

bilingual people who can function in two speech communities and grasp references from more than one cultural universe. [...] they tend to be well read in more than one literary tradition, so much so that they can often fine-tune their writing accordingly. It is much less common, however, for them to have garnered significant experience translating when they set about transferring one of their own texts into another language. [...] Prompted by circumstances, [...] and comforted by their own bilingualism, they basically try their hand at translation.<sup>435</sup>

In Combette’s case, she was not a self-translator in the ‘conventional’ sense as Grutman sets out, even though she effectively used her novels as, ‘stepping-stones to a new career.’<sup>436</sup> This is because she could already speak French and she knew the importance of using it, and not Creole, in the appropriate social contexts (as we can see in the characters’ code-switching in both novels) and used both French and Creole in her books, ostensibly to designate dialogue between conversations between Martinican working society and those between the ‘higher’ members of the social hierarchy.

---

<sup>434</sup> Maryse Condé, ‘Order, Disorder, Freedom, and the West Indian Writer’, *Yale French Studies*, 2.83 (1993), 121–135, (p.131).

<sup>435</sup> Rainier Grutman, ‘Beckett and Beyond: Putting Self-Translation in Perspective’, *Orbis Litterarum*, 63.3 (2013), 188–206, (p.193).

<sup>436</sup> *Ibid.* p. 195.

Rather, Combette sought to translate her Self metaphorically from the context of a laundry owner in Martinique, to a position further up the social hierarchy in Paris (in the process attempting to push against ascribed notions of social and cultural power asymmetry between France and Martinique), using the fictionalized version of her life in her novels to improve that in reality of herself and her family, demonstrating the *débrouillardise* that sustained her throughout her life. Most importantly, Combette understood the power of language in attempting to achieve her personal transformation. As Wilson notes,

If you understand the language responsively and are able to manipulate it, you pass; if you have access to the more highly valued form of that language, you gain a more prestigious identity. In other words, to construct an identity that allows access, you need to master the language first.<sup>437</sup>

Furthermore, habitus plays a role in understanding Combette's self-translation. Her actions, whilst not translation in the literal meaning of the word, do retain a sense of metaphorical translation in terms of the transformation she seeks to affect, and demonstrate not only her reaction against her childhood habitus but also her ability to change her 'social identity' through both her social ambitions and literary work. Habitus is a fluid concept because, as Meylearts notes,

Dispositions engender practices, perceptions and attitudes that are regular but not necessarily fixed or invariant. Under the influence of social position and one's individual and collective past, every cultural actor thus develops (and continues to develop) a social identity, that is, a certain representation of the world and of the person's position therein.<sup>438</sup>

Meylearts goes on to stress that, 'only a dynamic and plural concept of habitus can contribute to an understanding of the actual products of translation and the regularities and discontinuities of a translator's individual itinerary within a

---

<sup>437</sup> Rita Wilson, 'Parallel Creations – Between Self-Translation and Translation of the Self' in *Creative Constraints: Translation and Authorship*, ed. by Rita Wilson and Leah Gerber (Victoria: Monash University Publishing, 2012), pp.47-65 (p. 54).

<sup>438</sup> Reine Meylearts, 'Habitus and self-image of native literary author-translators in diglossic societies', *Translation and Interpreting Studies*, 5.1(2010), 1-19, p. 2.

specific socio-cultural and geo-political context.’<sup>439</sup> Accordingly, we can map Combette’s social trajectory through several different permutations of habitus, from a working child from an impoverished background, to a young woman in Martinique who owns her own business, to a young mother in Paris intent upon bettering the social and economic circumstances of herself and her family. In an almost Russian doll-like effect, we can see how each developing social habitus has informed the next, and contributed to the final picture that she portrayed in her novels (although this in itself is a modified picture, as I shall explain later in this chapter).

### **Mayotte Capécia and Frantz Fanon**

This section of the chapter will examine the fact that, as I have previously mentioned, much of the interest in Capécia is generated by the harsh criticisms levelled at her by Frantz Fanon, rather than through any real interest in her writing itself. I aim to understand how Fanon interprets Capécia’s text, and how it has been re-evaluated by feminist critical theorists in more recent times. I shall then construct a reading of both the writer and her work drawn from and (at times) in opposition to previous criticism. I will also consider if it is possible to separate out that which Fanon and other critics impose on the text, and the original intention of the writer.

---

<sup>439</sup> Ibid.

Considering Macey's comments that Capécia would not find a continuing sympathetic readership in contemporary France (or even in the intervening period of time) were it not for Fanon's damning critique of her writing, we see therefore that both writers are accidentally and inextricably bound up with one another. Fanon will forever be linked to *Je suis Martiniquaise*. More than this, however, both writers have a shared heritage raised in Martinique in the early twentieth century. They were born in 1920s Martinique, where they both grew up in Fort-de-France. Whilst Combette left school at the age of thirteen to find a job to help support herself and her family, Fanon was able to continue his education (which was punctuated by a spell in the French army during World War Two), until eventually qualifying as a psychiatrist in France. Although clearly more privileged in terms of the education Fanon received, his formative experience was still marked by being 'Other', and Cherki notes in her biography of Fanon,

the awareness of being a second-class citizen, however, living in the shadow of the *dix familles* who represented the power of the old colonial structure, must have left some kind of mark, but it did not significantly alter the well-entrenched realities of day-to-day life, school, sports, adolescent discoveries, and familiar landmarks.<sup>440</sup>

Fanon was well-educated, and known for his intellectual ability and love of debating issues about which he felt passionately.

Combette, however, lived a deeply practical existence, which focused on obtaining jobs which would help sustain her family but which also permitted her to improve her social standing. She learned how to write French properly on her

---

<sup>440</sup> Alice Cherki, *Frantz Fanon: A Portrait*, trans. Nadia Benabid (New York: Cornell University Press, 2006), pp. 8-9.

arrival in Paris, which represented the ultimate assimilation into the higher echelons of society, because,

the colonized becomes convinced that the burden of his or her corporeality can be purged through the acquisition of the French language. The more the Antillean strives to assimilate linguistically, hence culturally, the more he or she ascends the great chain of being, moves closer to being recognized as fully human [...]. [...] And mastery of the colonizer's language is perceived as one potentially liberating, vindicating resource [...].<sup>441</sup>

Sharpley-Whiting recalls Capécia's childhood attempts in *Je suis Martiniquaise* to blacken her white classmates' skin by throwing ink over them and therefore liberating herself from their objectifying gaze, and argues that the need to lose the instant signification of black skin provoked in Mayotte, 'the desire to be rid of the epidermal schema, to slough off the black skin and the historical realities of black existence [...].'<sup>442</sup> Fanon, on the other hand, sees this episode as the gateway to her need for lactification and confirmation of her 'mauvaise foi', rather than an attempt to 'be rid' of that which defined her, 'ne pouvant plus noircir, ne pouvant plus négrier le monde, elle va tenter dans son corps et dans sa pensée de le blanchir.'<sup>443</sup> Reinforcing Capécia's inability to control her own colour by forcibly changing that of others, Fanon underscores the power of the patriarchy and the lack of agency in her life, here, and later in her job as a laundress. In so doing, he refuses the possibility of her translation into a different social habitus. Yet Sharpley-Whiting's reading of this childhood incident, rather than indicating an early desire to self-lactify as posited by Fanon, instead suggests a sense of self-determination in her behaviour, and an initial need to modify the other. Whilst she does not align herself with some of the feminist theorists who have reclaimed Capécia's text from Fanon in their own

---

<sup>441</sup> T. Denean Sharpley-Whiting, *Frantz Fanon: Conflicts and Feminisms* (Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers Inc., 1998), p. 33-34.

<sup>442</sup> Sharpley-Whiting, *Frantz Fanon: Conflicts and Feminisms*, p. 33.

<sup>443</sup> Fanon, *Peau noire, masques blancs*, p. 36.

work (which we will examine later in this section) and often comes to agree with Fanon, she does, at this point, provide an important counterargument to his portrayal of Capécia as entirely inauthentic in her desire for lactification, ‘la blancheur à tout prix’<sup>444</sup> and which points towards the portrayal of the young Capécia’s developing skills of *débrouillardise*.

Whether it is a conscious decision or not, questions surrounding their race and how to live in the gaze of the Other permeate the work of both Martinicans. However, a key difference in Fanon and Combette’s perception of their position and their relationship to others, regardless of their colour, lies in their gender. Although Fanon writes about who he understands to be Capécia in the chapter entitled, ‘La femme de couleur et le Blanc’, he rarely interrogates the question of gender. Indeed, it has been noted that, ‘much of Capécia’s importance depended on her usefulness as a foil to Fanon’s primary concern: that of establishing the African Caribbean male’s right to full humanity. [...] [*Peau noire, masques blancs*] remained blithely unaware of its own hegemonic genderized assumptions.’<sup>445</sup> Rather, he turns his attention to the fact that she is ‘[...] ‘accidentalizing’ [by referring to her white Canadian grandmother] her blackness [...] resenting her facticity [...] living in bad faith and lapsing into inauthenticity [in seeking lactification]’<sup>446</sup> that Fanon finds most offensive in her behaviour.

Fanon’s criticisms of Capécia throughout the chapter, ‘la femme de couleur et le

---

<sup>444</sup> Ibid. p. 39.

<sup>445</sup> Clarisse Zimra, ‘Daughters of Mayotte, Sons of Frantz: The Unrequited Self in Caribbean Literature’, in *An Introduction to Caribbean Francophone Writing: Guadeloupe and Martinique* ed. by Sam Haigh (Oxford: Berg, 1999), pp. 177-194, (p. 179).

<sup>446</sup> Macey, *Frantz Fanon*, p. 177. ‘Accidentalizing’ is Macey’s translation for Fanon’s neologism ‘accidentaliser’ - ‘au lieu de se découvrir noire absolument, elle va accidentaliser ce fait’ (Paris: 1952, p. 37). Although Macey describes this word as ‘clumsy’ (London: 2000, p. 176) it sums up Capécia’s (and to a degree, Fanon’s) need to provide an explanation for choices and behaviour. For example, she ‘[accidentalizes] her blackness’ (London: 2000, p. 177) by talking about the fact that her maternal grandmother was white.

Blanc', although wide-ranging, link back to his disapproval of this particular trait, and the fact that he refers to it in predominantly philosophical terms suggests that he is more concerned about the theoretical side of the argument than fully empathizing with the socio-cultural reality in which Capécia lived, as a black Martinican woman, which could be considered ironic given his emphasis on 'l'expérience vécue'.

Furthermore, Fanon's inconsistency in his approach is underscored by the rather more sympathetic reading of the character of Jean Veneuse in *Un homme pareil aux autres* by René Maran which he puts forward in the following chapter, 'L'homme de couleur et la femme blanche'. Veneuse exhibits similar desires as Capécia, chief among them, the desire to marry a white person. Yet, whilst Fanon dismisses this as an expression of Capécia's need for symbolic lactification, because she cannot alter her physical colour, Veneuse is described as merely seeking permission from 'les Blancs' for his relationship with a white woman (although this acts as representative of his relationship with white people more generally). In seeking permission, Veneuse is also seeking valorization from the white community, much in the same way as Capécia does. However, Fanon approaches the relationship of the black man to the white woman in an entirely different and altogether more positive manner. Veneuse is still portrayed as 'Other' but Fanon explains this, his need for acceptance, as being the result of his experience of abandonment, having been sent to a boarding school at a young age.

Moreover, Fanon treats Veneuse much more favourably (but still not entirely complementarily) because he contrasts both the masculine perceptions of (self) worth and value with Veneuse's vulnerability and 'Other'-ness, noting that, ' [il] accepte les apéritifs, mais les rend. Il ne veut rien devoir à personne. Car s'il ne les rend pas, il est un nègre ingrat comme tous les autres.'<sup>447</sup> Whilst Fanon accepts Veneuse's social position as that of the outsider, he allows Veneuse to act as a 'quêteur', seeking out peace and acceptance.

La non-valorisation affective amène toujours l'abandonnique à un sentiment extrêmement pénible et obsédant d'exclusion, de n'avoir nulle part sa place, d'être de trop partout, affectivement parlant...Etre 'l'Autre' est une expression que j'ai rencontrée à plusieurs reprises dans le langage des abandonniques. Etre 'l'Autre', c'est se sentir toujours en position instable, demeurer sur le qui-vive, prêt à être répudié et... faisant inconsciemment tout ce qu'il faut pour que la catastrophe prévue se produise.<sup>448</sup>

Although much the same can be said of Capécia and her continual search for that which would improve her life, there is no attempt to connect this characteristic to her, merely an attack in terms of her perceived bad faith. Fanon states,

nous verrons pourquoi l'amour est interdit aux Mayotte Capécia de tous les pays. Car l'amour ne doit pas me permettre de réaliser des phantasmes infantiles: il doit au contraire m'aider à les dépasser.<sup>449</sup>

In contrast to the financial independence displayed by Veneuse as a way of proving his inherent self worth, Fanon refers to Capécia's job as a laundry woman to prove that she craves lactification and cleanliness (conforming to colonial tropes of the position of the colonized being inferior and unclean), rather than to suggest that she is a hard-working woman who asks that she is paid a fair price for a high quality service, thus demonstrating her relative financial autonomy,

---

<sup>447</sup> Fanon, *Peau noire, masques blancs*, p. 64.

<sup>448</sup> Ibid. p. 61.

<sup>449</sup> Ibid. p. 36.



je me faisais payer cher, plus cher qu'ailleurs, mais je travaillais mieux, et comme les gens de Fort-de-France aiment le linge propre, ils venaient chez moi. Finalement, ils étaient fiers de se faire blanchir chez Mayotte.<sup>450</sup>

This inconsistency in Fanon's treatment of black female and male characters perhaps points towards a greater uneasiness and preoccupation in terms of inauthenticity or non-conformity to gender norms, couched within a psychiatric framework which purports to probe questions of racial inequality. This would directly contradict Macey's assertion that, 'in terms of the philosophical framework of Fanon's analysis, Mayotte's bad faith is more important than her gender'<sup>451</sup> and point toward Fanon's own underlying adherence to a traditional Western patriarchal social structure.

Feminist critics of Fanon's work on Capécia are often quick to point out two perceived failings on his part, which are then held as evidence for his flawed and unsubstantiated argument<sup>452</sup> and, within the context of this chapter, to be proof of his need to modify, and effectively translate, the words of Capécia to fit his overall thesis. Firstly, that he accuses Capécia of inauthenticity in her desire to have a white French lover, whilst he himself is inauthentic in his life, having married a white French woman. Macey cautions, 'it is always dangerous to accuse someone of being in bad faith without lapsing into it oneself. And Fanon

---

<sup>450</sup> Mayotte Capécia, 'Je suis Martiniquaise', in *Relire Mayotte Capécia: Une Femme des Antilles dans l'Espace Colonial Français (1916 - 1955)*, ed. by Myriam Cottias and Madeleine Dobie (Paris: Armand Colin, 2012), pp. 59-169 (p. 131).

All source text extracts are taken from Myriam Cottias and Madeleine Dobie, *Relire Mayotte Capécia: Une femme des Antilles dans l'espace colonial français (1916 – 1955)*, 'Je suis Martiniquaise' et 'La Nègresse blanche' (*Textes intégraux*) (Paris: Armand Collin, 2012).

<sup>451</sup> Macey, *Frantz Fanon*, p. 177.

<sup>452</sup> For a broad introduction to scholarship in this area, see Clarisse Zimra and Joan Dayan's chapters in Haigh's *An Introduction to Caribbean Francophone Writing* (Oxford: Berg, 1999), Maryse Condé, 'Order, Disorder, Freedom, and the West Indian writer', *Yale French Studies*, 2.83 (1993), pp. 121-135, Gwen Bergner, 'Who is that masked woman? Or, the Role of Gender in Fanon's Black Skin, White Masks', *PMLA*, 110.1, (1995), pp. 75-88, T. Denean Sharpley-Whiting, *Frantz Fanon: Conflicts and Feminisms* (Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers Inc., 1998).

does precisely that when he ‘accidentalizes’ his own marriage.’<sup>453</sup> Indeed, there is little mention of his personal relationships in the context of the chapter, or *Peau noire, masques blancs* as a whole. Secondly, the fact that Fanon also does not seem to distinguish between the writer and the character of Mayotte Capécia in *Je suis Martiniquaise* is often cited. This would be an easy error to make – the writer and the main protagonist of *Je suis Martiniquaise* share the same name, some incidents which happened in Capécia’s life (Combette’s own autobiographical details) appear in the text, and elements of the story are taken from her naval lieutenant’s memoirs. This conflation of two distinct, yet undoubtedly inter-connected, personae inevitably brings up questions pertaining to autobiography and the nature of the exploration of identity in literature. It also reinforces patriarchal dominance over Combette, not only is her work dominated by her publisher (as we shall see later in the chapter) but Fanon’s emphasis on his own interpretation of the text leaves Combette little room to truly escape past gender norms. Lejeune posits the case that in autobiographical writing there exists several forms of ‘je’, including the ‘je’ of the author, the ‘je’ presented in the text, and the ‘je’ as understood by the reader. He proposes that the perception of the self is based on ‘mémoires collectives’, writing,

si Je est un autre, ce n’est pas seulement parce que son énonciation cache des instances multiples: c’est que tout récit de vie n’est qu’une reprise ou une transformation de formes de vie préexistantes.<sup>454</sup>

The notion that the word ‘je’ conceals beneath it a multi-faceted understanding of what ‘je’ entails (author, protagonist, a reader’s perception of all or one of these) is particularly relevant with reference to Mayotte Capécia’s work and

---

<sup>453</sup> Macey, *Frantz Fanon*, p. 177.

<sup>454</sup> Philippe Lejeune, *Je est un autre: L’autobiographie de la littérature aux médias* (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1980), p. 8.

recalls the liminal position her writing occupies between fact and fiction.

Hewitt, in *Autobiographical Tightropes*, suggests that,

autobiography's slippery relation to distinct conceptual models – traditional and modern – [is because] it stirs its mixtures of literature and life in literature, making it difficult to keep the “purely” literary and the “purely” referential in their “proper” (opposed) places.<sup>455</sup>

The slippage that occurs at times between fiction and reality, and the liminal position both the writer (embodying both Combette and Capécia) and text inhabit is clearly demonstrated in *Je suis Martiniquaise*. The exploration of the life and identity of an Antillean woman that is undertaken in this novel is similar to that led by Maryse Condé in *En attendant le Bonheur (Hérémakhonon)*,<sup>456</sup> a text which has been called autobiographical, a claim which Condé has vigorously rebuked. In using the first person narrative in the novel – a technique employed in *Je suis Martiniquaise* – she, ‘transforms the autobiographical issues of her novel into an exemplary performance of the personal’, and this is strikingly relevant to the work of Capécia. Despite the fact that *Je suis Martiniquaise* was initially marketed as, ‘the autobiography of an Antillean woman of colour, [and] as the first-time, intimate revelation of her mentality – superstitious, exotic and passionate’<sup>457</sup>, the text is emphatically not autobiographical. Rather, Combette’s personal experience combined with socio-cultural details mined from Lafcadio Hearn’s *Two Years in the French West Indies*, and it is then put to use within a literary, and fictional framework, to explore the experience of one Antillean woman (as I have previously mentioned, Capécia – despite Fanon presenting her as a cautionary tale to other women – does not act as an ‘everywoman’ in her

---

<sup>455</sup> Leah D. Hewitt, *Autobiographical Tightropes: Simone de Beauvoir, Nathalie Sarraute, Marguerite Duras, Monique Wittig and Maryse Condé* (Lincoln & London: University of Nebraska Press, 1990), p. 1.

<sup>456</sup> See Maryse Condé, *En attendant le bonheur (Hérémakhonon)* (Paris: Éditions Robert Seghers, 1988).

<sup>457</sup> Mayotte Capécia, ‘I Am a Martinican Woman’ and ‘The White Negress,’ *Two Novelettes of the 1940s*, trans. Beatrice Stith Clark (Pueblo, Colorado: Passeggiata Press, 1997), p. viii.

writing), questions of identity and, more broadly, social belonging. The use of the first person narrative structure is an important device to draw the reader into the personal, and particular, experience of the protagonist. It connects the reader and protagonist in a way that could not be achieved by a third person narrative and this combination of autobiographical elements in an overall literary framework (that is emphatically not autobiographical) has tripped up many readers and critics, including Frantz Fanon. Finally, it provokes further questions when one considers the autoethnographic potential of the novel, and if this can be fully realized.

Fanon was one amongst many who have been taken in by the suggestion that Mayotte Capécia was both named author and protagonist, assuming that the work was autobiographical and thus inadvertently, ‘faisant de ‘Mayotte Capécia’ la star d’une négrophobie ignoble.’<sup>458</sup> However, work completed by Christiane Makward and James A. Arnold compellingly argues the opposite. Arnold puts forward the case that the book was written not as an autobiographical exposé but rather as a text which would, ‘conforter dans leurs préjugés raciaux et colonialistes des lecteurs bourgeois qui cherchaient à fuir les horreurs de la guerre dans un roman exotique.’<sup>459</sup>

Combette presented the memoirs of her French lover as a basis for a novel to the publisher of Corrêa, Edmond Buchet, who considered it, ‘impubliable mais d’une certaine façon utilisable.’<sup>460</sup> He asked her to write her own memories of

---

<sup>458</sup> A. James Arnold, ‘Frantz Fanon, Lafcadio Hearn et la supercherie de “Mayotte Capécia”’, *Revue de littérature comparée*, 302 (2002) 148-166, (p. 150).

<sup>459</sup> Ibid. p. 150.

<sup>460</sup> Makward, *Mayotte Capécia*, pp. 203–204.

Martinique, and because of this, ‘Mayotte apprit littéralement à écrire en dix-huit mois, avec ses amis; et ils concoctèrent les deux romans qu’elle signa.’<sup>461</sup> However, her own work was so scant that the book was put together using multiple sources; the ethnographic work of the nineteenth century travel writer Lafcadio Hearn provided the framework for the first section of the text, and the memoirs of Combette’s wartime lover forming that of the second section. Arnold draws our attention to the multiplicity of the authorship because much of the narrative and dialogue conforms to a European perception of what the Caribbean should be,<sup>462</sup> including the stereotypical portrayal of the Creole language in omitting the intervocalic ‘r’ sounds, and the use of a ‘typical’ Caribbean Voodoo doll in the novel which, ‘correspond bien davantage aux phantasmes européens qu’aux réalités du quimbois à la Martinique,’<sup>463</sup> suggesting that, ‘le point de vue de la narration s’organise en vue de valeurs et de réactions européennes.’<sup>464</sup> Indeed, this view is borne out with Capécia’s apparent desire for lactification and total assimilation into French society and culture. For contemporary French readers, it confirms their own opinions and prejudices of the island and its inhabitants. Furthermore, Arnold’s assertion that knowing Lafcadio Hearn’s identity as the plagiarized writer is less important than knowing the work is not written by Capécia herself, highlights the particularly complex structures of a text of multi-authored origins, especially that which is created specifically for a particular market and which uses the purported ‘author’ more as a figurehead than an example of Antillean women’s writing.

---

<sup>461</sup> Ibid.

<sup>462</sup> This recalls my examination in Chapter 3 of the use of the Haitian painting on the front cover of the translation of Chamoiseau’s *Chronique des sept misères* to convey to a broad anglophone audience the impression of ‘the Caribbean’. Likewise, a similar effect is achieved here with a ‘Caribbean’ accent portrayed in sweeping, yet recognizable, term to an anglophone audience.

<sup>463</sup> Arnold, ‘Frantz Fanon, Lafcadio Hearn et la supercherie de “Mayotte Capécia”’, p. 154.

<sup>464</sup> Ibid. p. 153.

Qu'il ait lui-même [Edmond Buchet] fait les recherches dans les ouvrages de Hearn copieusement plagés dans *Je suis Martiniquaise* m'importe peu. [...] Ce qui compte ici est le fait que la perspective Romanesque n'est point celle d'une Antillaise quelconque mais l'oeuvre d'Européens conscients de confectionner un ouvrage à l'intention de leurs semblables.<sup>465</sup>

Neither the purported 'author' nor the publisher sought to dispel the myth that the work was entirely of Mayotte Capécia's own hand. It was, 'très bien reçu par la presse tant à Paris qu'en province' and was sold with a 'bande publicitaire du livre [...] ornée d'une belle photographie non-exotisante de Capécia'<sup>466</sup>, which did nothing to disprove another popular myth that the protagonist and the writer were indeed the same person.

To be sure, the conflation of the writer and protagonist of *Je suis Martiniquaise* conveniently helps Fanon to construct part of his overall argument against Capécia (as Suk explains below) but Condé notes the perilousness of Fanon's mis-informed appraisal of Capécia's work,

[he] takes a very dangerous stand. He deliberately confuses the author and the object of her fiction. Although Mayotte says *Je*, nothing proves that she was writing about herself. [...] At that time, all the societies which had suffered from the wrongs of slavery and colonial exploitation were alienated in the same way. [...] Mayotte Capécia was simply no exception to the rule. The unjust criticism has forever cast a slur on the book and overshadowed its other interesting aspects.<sup>467</sup>

Jeannie Suk highlights the shaky ground on which Fanon stands by amalgamating the fictional and factual, in order to support his argument that Capécia should act as a warning for any other black women tempted to behave in a similar manner:

Fanon's erasure of distance between self and fictionalized self in effect enables him to reproach the author for her character's thoughts and actions. He in turn directs his animadversion towards her act of writing [...]. [...] Fanon reads the novel *Je suis Martiniquaise* ('sa vie') as autobiography. However, one might note that the acknowledged unintelligibility of Capécia's random motivations may undermine

---

<sup>465</sup> Ibid. pp. 155 – 156.

<sup>466</sup> Makward, *Mayotte Capécia*, p. 27.

<sup>467</sup> Condé, 'Order, Disorder, Freedom, and the West Indian Writer', p.131.

Fanon's ability to read the narrative as a transparent authorial confession. Nevertheless Fanon relies on this erasure of distance between author and character to hold the author out as a cautionary tale.<sup>468</sup>

Fanon's focus on certain misunderstood aspects of Capécia's purported life and literature in order to allow him to use *Je suis Martiniquaise* to illustrate his warning to black Antillean women about the dangers of living inauthentically has since only fuelled feminist criticism of his writing. Yet, problematically, the 1997 translation of the text and feminist critical re-readings of Capécia's text in light of, and in reaction to, Fanon's discussion of *Je suis Martiniquaise* can be themselves found guilty of textual misappropriation, effectively translating the work to suit their own agendas, much in the same way as Fanon previously did, and again, refusing Combette the opportunity of translating her self in such a way to escape external objectification.

Gwen Bergner, however, in her article, 'Who is that masked woman? Or, the Role of Gender on Fanon's *Black Skin, White Masks*', focuses on the role that gender plays in his work. Bergner is not entirely dismissive of Fanon's work, noting that, '*Black Skin, White Masks* effects, [...], a paradigm shift that reconfigures psychoanalysis to account for racial identity and that enables a psychoanalytic critique of racism.'<sup>469</sup> Yet, despite this radical take on racism, there exists little examination of gender or the issue of sexual difference in the experience of racism, even though Fanon includes two chapters in the text dedicated to the examination of relationships between black women and white

---

<sup>468</sup> Jeannie Suk, *Postcolonial Paradoxes in French Caribbean Writing: Césaire, Glissant, Condé* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), p. 90.

<sup>469</sup> Gwen Bergner, 'Who is that masked woman? Or, the Role of Gender in Fanon's *Black Skin, White Masks*', *PMLA*, 110.1 (1995), 75-88 (p. 76).

It is important to note that Sharpley-Whiting, Bergner and Zimra perpetuate the portrayal of Mayotte Capécia as the writer and protagonist of the text, rather than herself being a creation of Lucette Céranus Combette and Edmond Buchet, her publisher.

men, and vice versa. Bergner sees this lack of engagement as a serious theoretical flaw to Fanon's argument for he, '[constructs] race through rigid categories of gender', when she deems it, '[...] necessary not only to posit alternative representations [to the masculine norm] of femininity but also to consider how his account of normative raced masculinity depends on the production or exclusion of femininities.'<sup>470</sup> In her article, Bergner seeks to broaden out the psychoanalytical framework of Fanon's discussion to take into proper account sexual difference and attendant social and economic values for both black women and men. For Zimra, Fanon's adherence to strict binary norms regarding the opposition between genders and races simplifies and 'racializes gender (women reproduce the race) as it genderizes race (to be a black woman is, in essence, different from being a black man).'471

Yet neither Bergner nor Zimra draw on Fanon's disregard for the fact that Capécia (the writer), in both *Je suis Martiniquaise* and *La Nègresse blanche*, displays racist behaviour towards other black people, thus conferring a value system on others and creating a position of power in a hierarchy of values for her protagonists, Mayotte and Isaure. In being ashamed of her black identity, and by aligning herself with the opinions of the *békés* and colonialist French, Capécia is distancing herself from fellow Martinicans, thus implicitly embracing both the notion that 'white' is inherently superior and, consequently, the racist ideology of assimilationist policies, allowing Fanon to emphasize her inauthenticity. Fanon,

---

<sup>470</sup> Bergner, 'Who is that masked woman?', p. 77.

<sup>471</sup> Clarisse Zimra, 'Daughters of Mayotte, Sons of Frantz: The Unrequited Self in Caribbean Literature', pp. 181-182.



too, avoids explicit discussion of the racist aspects of Capécia's work,<sup>472</sup> preferring to focus on the overarching problem of inauthenticity and the adherence to the binary of black versus white in his argument,

il semble en effet que pour elle le Blanc et le Noir représentent les deux pôles d'un monde, pôles en lutte perpétuelle: véritable conception manichéiste du monde; le mot est jeté, il faut s'en souvenir – Blanc ou Noir, telle est la question.<sup>473</sup>

Given the heavy editing the book underwent, it is hard to know if this is a true reflection of Capécia's own beliefs, or one encouraged by the copy editors in order to appeal to the contemporary French readership. Fanon's assumption that these are the words of Combette herself both supports his argument and further reinforces the binary oppositions between the experiences of black men and women.

Sharpley-Whiting's argument emphasizes the devaluation of black people in a hierarchized society (which is not examined in great detail by either Bergner or Zimra), dependent on the gradation of worth that Fanon explores, and concludes that it, 'is not experienced exclusively in material terms. Economic worthlessness, and dis-ease, mediated through racial difference, are experienced internally or psychologically.'<sup>474</sup> Bergner refers to Fanon's description of Capécia's work as being 'cut-price merchandise', but does not correct the assumption that she herself was not always economically independent and suggests that, 'her socioeconomic behaviour is largely influenced by the

---

<sup>472</sup> Whilst Fanon does discuss the fact that 'négrophobes' do exist (Fanon, *Peau noire, masques blancs*, p. 43), he does not clearly make the link between this description and Capécia's own behaviour.

<sup>473</sup> Fanon, *Peau noire, masques blancs*, p.36.

<sup>474</sup> Sharpley-Whiting, *Frantz Fanon: Conflicts and Feminisms*, p. 33.

economic and sexual politics of a racist, patriarchal society.’<sup>475</sup> Whilst it is true that this was the contemporary sociopolitical context for Capécia and her writing, it is problematic to apply these strictures to her own life. As previously mentioned, she was clear in her need to remain financially independent, and in her desire to lead a life that was different to that of her mother, reinforcing the notion of escaping from her previous social habitus. This led her to run several businesses over her lifetime and did not present herself at any time as a victim to her circumstances. Zimra, on the other hand, does not engage with this aspect of Capécia’s life. Her argument is curtailed by the fact that although she acknowledges the rigid binaries at play in Fanon’s own work, she does not propose alternative means of research in her own article. By returning to the concept of the conferral of worth in society, Bergner maintains the psychoanalytical aspect of Fanon’s inquiry, whilst moving it on to criticize Capécia herself. As Sharpley-Whiting notes, ‘trapped in a valued-less existence, what resources are open to the worth less (black males) and the worth-less (black females)?’<sup>476</sup>

Capécia is consistently scathing in her descriptions of black men, and the protagonists of both texts, Mayotte and Isaure, are of entirely the same opinion in this regard, thus allowing them power and a higher social position in conferring value on black men and other women because of their physical attributes and behaviour. Furthermore, the fact that both women are loved by white men is said to give them a greater sense of value, ‘the white male is the ultimate purveyor of

---

<sup>475</sup> Bergner, ‘Who is that masked woman?’, p. 83.

<sup>476</sup> Ibid.

value'<sup>477</sup> which draws the women further into an inauthentic appreciation of their own lives in their relation to other men, both black and white. Mayotte states, 'je ne voulais plus toucher à ces hommes de couleur qui ne peuvent s'empêcher de courir après toutes les femmes [...]'<sup>478</sup>, whilst Isaure in *La Négrresse blanche* notes, 'je vous jure que ces sales nègres lorsqu'ils sont excités, ils sont capables de tout.'<sup>479</sup> Isaure also demonstrates extreme snobbery in her treatment of other black women, including her servant, Lucia. She describes her as 'du type africain le plus pur. [...] aucune goutte de sang blanc. Avec sa mentalité d'esclave, elle était dévouée corps et âme à Isaure. [...] Parfois, elle [Isaure] enviait la noire de n'avoir pas plus de scrupules qu'un animal.'<sup>480</sup> This demonstrates the degree to which Capécia might be said to be 'blackphobic' and 'a black blackfemmephobe'<sup>481</sup> in both of her novels, an aspect of her character with which the other critics previously noted have not engaged.

In their attempts to resituate Capécia's writing away from the glare of Fanon's past criticisms, Bergner and Zimra have tended to focus on the gender binary, and psychoanalytic aspects to his argument that they felt needed readdressed. In so doing, she has been held up as an example of black womanhood repressed not only by white men, but also by her fellow black men in a stifling patriarchal society. By effectively ignoring the less palatable aspects of her work, including her own blackphobia explored by Sharpley-Whiting, Bergner and Zimra have used Capécia as a 'poster girl' to fulfill their own agenda, appropriating her in exactly the same manner as Fanon, several decades previously. Her writing is

---

<sup>477</sup> Sharpley-Whiting, *Frantz Fanon: Conflicts and Feminisms*, p. 35.

<sup>478</sup> Cottias and Dobie, *Relire Mayotte Capécia*, p. 128.

<sup>479</sup> Ibid. p.173.

<sup>480</sup> Ibid. p.187.

<sup>481</sup> Sharpley-Whiting, *Frantz Fanon: Conflicts and Feminisms*, p. 40.

now no longer solely viewed through the optic of masculine oppression, but now also a feminist repression of the full picture of Capécia and the characters she created. The title of Makward's study of Capécia, *Mayotte Capécia ou l'aliénation selon Fanon* encapsulates much of what is questionable about presumably well-intentioned scholarship surrounding Capécia and her work. It perpetuates gender dualism, and continues to pit the 'victim' of Capécia against the 'aggressor' Fanon, promoting not only an oversimplification of the problem at hand but also foregrounding gender in what could be termed an anachronistic manner, overlaying gender binary-based concerns onto a criticism which in no way supposed to encompass such questions.

The re-appropriation of Capécia's work by feminist critics means that they can use her novels, and the fact that she has been vilified by a contemporary black male writer, to validate their own ideology. Obviously, critics must read literature in such a way as to provide evidence to support or refute a specific argument, but it is of particular interest in this context, because the selective way in which it occurs neatly parallels a similar re-appropriation of *Peau noire, masques blancs* by Charles Lam Markmann in his 1967 translation. As I have previously argued in Chapter 2 of this thesis, it is likely Markmann translated specific words and phrases in such a way as appeal to a readership socially and politically engaged with the American black civil rights movement, shifting the tone of direct speech from the Caribbean to that of the American South, and modifying the philosophical vocabulary Fanon used in order to render it accessible to as wide a readership as possible. The ethical considerations of this type of translation are complex because whilst he does not convey the precise

meaning of Fanon's text, Markmann opens up his work to a new audience, eager to make use of it within their own socio-political sphere. In so doing, these readers may then have been encouraged to continue to explore Fanon's body of work, and that of those who influenced him, but without knowing (not having read the source text) that they were unable to understand the full picture of Fanon's ideology through this translation.

Similarly, when we consider the appropriation, and indeed, translation of Capécia's work into different socio-cultural spheres of interest, firstly by Fanon, and then by the likes of Bergner, Zimra and so on, forty years later, we can also appreciate the ethical concerns that this provokes. Each focuses on a particular dimension of Capécia's work (Fanon, her inauthenticity, Bergner, Zimra et al., her gender and relationship with men, whether or not within a psychiatric framework) and uses this to support his or her own ideology. Again, ethical questions arise because although the use of Capécia's work by these writers has raised her profile as a writer in her own right and, perhaps, increased her readership, it is by means of dissemination which implicitly means that her work is no longer hers, but still viewed by the reader as part of a whole, whether this is in terms of Fanon's or feminist criticism. Furthermore, the use of Capécia's work in these contexts is also very selective, as Sharpley-Whiting notes that much of the feminist criticism surrounding Capécia (the writer) is based on the same racial prejudices as Fanon's originally were, ignoring entirely the fact that she consistently puts forward an anti-black and, indeed, blackphobic point of view in her work, confirming her 'inauthenticity' and 'bad faith' by siding with the ex-coloniser and adopting their racist discourse. She focuses on the

problematic appropriation of Fanon's original critique of Capécia and her subsequent re-appropriation by feminist critics, saying,

a more appropriate and plausible critique of Fanon's gender politics with respect to Mayotte Capécia lies ultimately in his *not* exploring her sexism, specifically her antiblack woman phobia, her intraracial gendered relations. While Euro-American lit-crit feminists' gendered criticisms of Fanon are undercut by their lack of antiracist, anticapitalist, and antifemale-sexist analyses, Fanon's analyses of Capécia fixate on antiblack racism, alienation and economic disease. One is left with gaping holes, 'blind spots', if you will, in both critical analyses.<sup>482</sup>

Race and gender are two areas left unexamined by Beatrice Stith Clark, despite the influence that they may reasonably have had on the outcome of her translation. In the only published English translation of *Je suis Martiniquaise* and *La Négresse blanche*<sup>483</sup>, no reason is given in the introductory essay to explain the lack of English translations of the text undertaken in the intervening fifty years between French publication and her own. Stith Clark, however, neatly side-stepped the question of literary merit (which it is often suggested the texts lack) and suggested that Capécia's work was worth translating because, 'she is discussed as a writer in all major anthologies, literary manuals and bibliographies on Francophone Caribbean literatures.'<sup>484</sup> In the introductory essay, she touched on the main reason for Capécia's enduring appeal by describing the novels as being, 'an inevitable expression of the realities of a marginal group, a buffer society, created by the dominant one to disseminate delusion and self-deception'<sup>485</sup>, which chimes with, and sets the framework for, later findings in scholarship by Makward, Cottias and Dobie et al. Stith Clark felt a personal sympathy with Capécia's writing, as it recalled her own adolescent experiences,

---

<sup>482</sup> Sharpley-Whiting, *Frantz Fanon: Conflicts and Feminisms*, p. 49.

<sup>483</sup> Mayotte Capécia, *I am a Martinican Woman & The White Negress, Two Novelettes of the 1940s* by Mayotte Capécia, trans. Beatrice Stith Clark (Pueblo, Colorado: Passeggiata Press, 1997).

<sup>484</sup> Ibid. p. 7.

<sup>485</sup> Ibid. pp. 2-3.

perhaps further explaining her desire to translate such an unknown writer in an Anglophone context. She described *Je suis Martiniquaise* as having, ‘resonated for me with uneasy familiarity [...] because [social complexities based on race and colour] had been an integral part of my societal background in Chicago.’<sup>486</sup> However, Stith Clark makes no reference to the fact that they experienced these social difficulties as women, nor notes the difference that makes in their perception of their social situation and others’ perception of them. When one considers the pivotal position gender holds in Capécia’s texts, by failing to make reference to it, Stith Clark does not allow their common gender to play a role in their interactions through translation. The lack of active engagement with this crucial aspect of the texts also displays a lack of awareness of the questions being raised concerning translation and gender at the very time that Stith Clark was translating. In Spivak’s work on the politics of translation she argues that, ‘the political agenda of translation is best pursued by foregrounding the act of mediation, by giving voice and body to the figure of the translator’ and reminds us that, ‘this body is gendered, and that it operates from within a specific set of cultural relationships – whose vectors of power can be influenced but not magically reversed by the act of translation.’<sup>487</sup> In not acknowledging power relationships that must be dealt with in the text itself, and in its translation, she implicitly reinforces the gendered ‘vectors’ of male-dominated, colonial power, which recalls the appropriative manner in which Markmann translated *Peau noire, masques blancs* examined in Chapter 2.

---

<sup>486</sup> Ibid. p. 1.

<sup>487</sup> Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, quoted in Sherry Simon, *Gender in Translation: Cultural Identity and the Politics of Transmission* (London and New York: Routledge, 1996), p. 154.

Beatrice Stith Clark's 1997 translation of *Je suis Martiniquaise* and *La Nègresse blanche* poses questions concerning how much the boundaries between the writer and translator's cultural identities could and should blur. Stith Clark was aware of the complex interplay between literary and personal identity of Combette/Capécia and the fact that her work may not have been entirely written by the named writer. Yet, because she chooses to translate without taking this fully into account, the opportunity is missed to create a rich, multi-faceted text that appropriately references her Martinican heritage, and to draw out that which remains of Capécia's feminine voice in the text. Using American idioms and linguistic styles to translate the text Stith Clark's demonstrates her adherence to dated translational binary norms, thus invoking Steiner's masculine hermeneutic translation theory which involved, "'appropriative penetration' of the source text, so that the text is 'captured' and the translator then compensates for the act of aggression by a gesture of restitution"<sup>488</sup> (which in this case would be the use of localized vocabulary, and Creole, and the glossary provided at the end of the text which explains some of these words).

The act of appropriation in this translation strategy echoes that of the creation of *Je suis Martiniquaise*, with the use of masculine writing to supplement Capécia's own writing, and her text being taken from its original source and shaped into that which would be considered to be commercially viable in a metropolitan French market. As previously mentioned, Stith Clark felt a kind of affinity with Capécia, but both her inability to capitalize on this affinity based on similar

---

<sup>488</sup> George Steiner, *After Babel* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1975), quoted in Susan Bassnett, 'Writing in No Man's Land: Questions of Gender and Translation', *Ilha do Desterro*, 28 (1992), 63-73 (p. 66).



childhoods experienced from a female perspective, and her emphasis on the English language allow the text to remain rooted in what, ultimately, is a French masculine understanding of what the experience of living as a black woman in post-colonial Martinique ('post' here used to signify the period after the end of French colonization) because of the fact that her novel was chiefly constructed by male publishers using Hearn's depiction of Martinique, André's memoirs and only supplemented by Capécia's own recollections of her childhood, despite the fact that it retains a feminine first person narrative in the novel. Stith Clark simply transfers this into a neo-imperialist American voice, using slang reminiscent of the American deep south, "[...] that don't make no difference, they brother and sister just the same"<sup>489</sup> for, "ça ne fait rien, ils sont quand même fe' et sœu"<sup>490</sup> and Americanisms such as, "What happened, honey?"<sup>491</sup> for, "Qu'a'ive'-t-il, ché'i?"<sup>492</sup>

Perhaps as a consequence, there is still little evidence to suggest that Mayotte Capécia's work is now being read in and of itself, or beyond the scope of postcolonial scholarship. This could be that it is now considered to be of little literary merit, despite the fact that it was prize-winning in its day. Today's readership may find the devices tired for rendering the particular Martinican accent in speech (in both source text and translation), the now familiar relationship/racial tropes hackneyed and over-used, and the provenance of the novel dubious. What cannot be denied, however, is the relevancy of the work as

---

<sup>489</sup> Capécia, *'I Am a Martinican Woman' and 'The White Negress'*, trans. Beatrice Stith Clark p. 98.

<sup>490</sup> Cottias and Dobie, *Relire Mayotte Capécia*, p. 122.

<sup>491</sup> Capécia, *'I Am a Martinican Woman' and 'The White Negress'* trans. Beatrice Stith Clark, p. 119.

<sup>492</sup> Cottias and Dobie, *Relire Mayotte Capécia*, p. 138.

a document of social historical interest. Written from the point of view of a young, black, Martinican woman, the text describes in detail the life and treatment of women in a DOM in the early twentieth century, and the fact that this was so rarely captured in writing makes her work all the more valuable. Indeed, to view Capécia's novels as a rare example of a woman bearing witness to an era of great change, in terms of both gender relations, and the relationship of France to her dependent territories may be the most fruitful way of approaching them, and certainly the basis for my further study in this chapter.

### **Identity in Translation**

As I have argued, Lucette Combette/Mayotte Capécia's identity, as both a writer and a fictional character written into her novel *Je suis Martiniquaise*, has been manipulated by various critics in order so that her work might adhere to their particular ideological agenda. However, what still remains to be examined is the extent to which Capécia manipulated her own identity in order to present a specific image of herself to her readership, and this will form a central focus of this part of the chapter. Whilst it is irrefutable that most people exercise a certain degree of self-censorship and self-translation in the portrayal of their inner self to the outside world, this action is noteworthy in Capécia's case precisely because of the fact that her literary identity has been so scrutinized and re-presented by the critics I introduced in the previous section. Following this, we must also consider the extent of the influence of men on her identity, because many of the

formative instances in her life occur precisely because of, or in spite of, the behaviour of a man in her life.

From the very beginning of *Je suis Martiniquaise*, Mayotte Capécia (the character) presents herself as a natural leader, as a schoolchild she leads a gang of other children nicknamed, 'l'équipe des Mauvaises Herbes' and already had her mind on bigger things than going to school:

Le calcul, la grammaire, l'histoire, figuraient pour moi de grands ennemis. Je leur résistais, je me refusais à me laisser fatiguer par eux. En somme, ils ne me préoccupaient pas, j'avais bien autre chose en tête. Moi, dont les ancêtres avaient été des esclaves, j'avais décidé d'être indépendante; et, aujourd'hui encore, bien que je n'aie pas toujours pu en jouir comme j'aurais voulu, je pense qu'il n'y a rien de mieux au monde que l'indépendance.<sup>493</sup>

This insistence on independence was maintained into Mayotte's adult life, as she writes that she would never rely on a man for money (although, ironically, by favouring white lovers, the implication is that she *does* rely on them for status and social mobility). Yet, despite this financial autonomy, much of her personal life is dictated by the behaviour of men around her, reducing the extent of her agency in her own life. Her father leaves her mother, forcing her to move to Fort-de-France to help support her family, as an adult, Mayotte is left to raise her children alone.

Therefore, by bearing witness to the life of one Martinican woman in telling this story and by appropriating her lover's memoirs into this narrative, Combette might begins to gain greater autonomy as she attempts to present her experiences. Yet, the fact that Buchet, her publisher, was so influential in the

---

<sup>493</sup> Cottias and Dobie, *Relire Mayotte Capécia*, p. 60.

content, structure of the novel and in making the decision to include Lafcadio Hearn's work to bulk out Combette's childhood memories in the first section of the text, shows her skills in *débrouillardise* and, indeed, her desire to translate herself into a more prosperous social habitus, to be frustrated, and that she is still dominated by a patriarchal society and one which wishes to perpetuate a nostalgic, colonialist version of Martinican society and history (from the metropolitan perspective). However, although the writing of *Je suis Martiniquaise* and *La Négrresse blanche* are often now considered to be important in the memorialization of and bringing to public awareness the life of a Martinican woman in terms of its social context, with Stith Clark noting that, 'the element of documentation [...] remains a valuable feature of both novels'<sup>494</sup>, caution is still urged when thinking about this text as being solely of Capécia's own hand. Valens, quoting Tinsley, reminds us that, "'in the end, the *I Am a Martinican Woman* that went to press in 1948 was a hybrid, multiauthored text" and cautions that "it is difficult to attribute too much agency to Capécia as tale teller"<sup>495</sup> because, 'the publishing house she approached, Corrêa, refused André's manuscript but suggested that Combette use it as a springboard for her own memoirs, which they would publish. Combette then reworked with the publishing house to write the first half of the book and to rewrite the second, based on André's manuscript.'<sup>496</sup> The different layers of creative input visible in Capécia's text, point toward an ultimate futility in Combette's search for personal and financial independence, with both her own words and André's manuscript being filtered by the professional copywriter and publisher, for a

---

<sup>494</sup> Capécia, '*I Am a Martinican Woman*' and '*The White Negress*', trans. Beatrice Stith Clark, p. xi.

<sup>495</sup> Keja L. Valens, *Desire between Women in Caribbean Literature* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), p. 169.

<sup>496</sup> Ibid. pp. 50-51.

purely commercial purpose – in post-war Paris and France, exotic colonialist novels were very popular. Poignantly, Arnold underscores Combette’s lack of authorial agency when he notes that, “‘Mayotte Capécia’ est le produit du circuit commercial dans lequel ce livre, sans grande prétention littéraire d’ailleurs s’inscrit. Elle n’en saurait être l’origine ni le point du départ.”<sup>497</sup> The book is no longer hers because of the very hybridity of its creation. It has been translated by many different protagonists throughout the publishing process – firstly, Capécia takes André’s manuscript and provides details of her own childhood, yet this is not the text that we read. Then, it has been read and re-worked by publishers and copywriters who have experienced her text within the framework of their own understanding of what it might be to live as a Martinican woman following decolonization, setting ever farther apart the figures of Mayotte Capécia, the writer, and the character which we finally see in print.

This translation of experience, and ultimately, identity serves to reinforce the fact that *Je suis Martiniquaise* was never intended to be read as an autobiographical story and points out the error in reading it as such. It is necessary then to separate fact from fictional identity, and it is very problematic when Beatrice Stith Clark asks, ‘should we succumb to the lure of probing the factual existence of Lucette Combette, née Ceranus, or let Mayotte Capécia remain her fictional self? I recommend the latter’<sup>498</sup> because this proposes that the reader should ignore the fact that the fact of Capécia’s life does intertwine with her fictional writing, entailing the type of textual misunderstanding that Fanon encountered.

---

<sup>497</sup> Arnold, ‘Frantz Fanon, Lafcadio Hearn et la supercherie de “Mayotte Capécia”’, p. 155.

<sup>498</sup> Mayotte Capécia, ‘*I Am a Martinican Woman*’ and ‘*The White Negress*’, trans. Beatrice Stith Clark, p. xi.

However, in my reading of *Je suis Martiniquaise* I do not go as far as Keja Valens who, '[analyzes] the text as a novel with no necessary correspondence between the story and the author's fictional or factual self'<sup>499</sup> as this again negates the real and documented links between the fact and the fiction present in the two novels. Rather, one informs the other, and knowledge of Combette's life enhances the understanding of her novels, instead of muddying it, showing facets of the author's identity in her literature. In bringing an awareness of her autobiography to the novels, we can better understand the motives behind her desire to 'self-translate' in her stories and the social complexity she encourages us to consider not only through her writing, but also by the fact that in sharing in the process of writing and publishing this novel, she attempts to break away from socially prescribed roles, yet finds herself moulded and stifled by the demands placed on (black) women in a Western patriarchal society, with Buchet insistent on publishing a retrogressive portrayal of Martinique and its inhabitants. Using the autobiographical elements to form the outline of the novel shows how *Je suis Martiniquaise* could be considered to be a work of ethnographic importance, in that, by using her own life and socio-cultural experience to inform a fictional novel, Capécia frames the fictional with the factual.

One cannot overstate the importance of the involvement - however much it was moderated by the publisher in charge of the project - of a young, previously illiterate Martinican woman in a Eurocentric literary world, which was traditionally considered at that time out of reach for a woman of her social class and background. Combette was arguably ahead of her time, in terms of her

---

<sup>499</sup> Valens, *Desire between Women in Caribbean Literature*, p. 169.

attempts to break into the literary ‘establishment’ and the work she contributed to. Makward points out her outsider status,

née cinquante ans trop tôt, sans doute, elle fut une mutante de la femme sans éducation, partant de rien et s’aventurant finalement par hasard dans les marges d’un instrument de pouvoir et d’une institution de prestige: la littérature.<sup>500</sup>

If one were to treat Mayotte Capécia the writer and character as one and the same (as is frequently the case and, to be sure, as Stith Clark suggests one should) one would label her arrival as a literary writer as a final manifestation of her own anti-black racism and the ultimate form of assimilation into a wider collective French identity, indeed one that is nostalgic for colonialist social hierarchies, which ‘s’impose à tous ceux qui appartiennent ou qui s’assimilent à ces classes, et rejettent les autres dans une sorte d’insignifiance.’<sup>501</sup> In this scenario, the Mayotte of *Je suis Martiniquaise* has come a step closer to fulfilling her impossible aim of total assimilation into French metropolitan society and culture. Yet, this perception needs to be further nuanced, as Combette herself had very little agency in the creation of the Capécia texts, reshaped and supplemented as they were by the Corrêa publishing house. Therefore, rather than being further assimilated into French metropolitan society, Combette herself remains marginalized while her life and what it represents socio-politically has been used for a commercial purpose, her history mined for that which will make it ‘saleable’ to the broader French readership. In providing the basic framework for these texts, Combette has become a symbol for the gains to be made through assimilation. Beyond the fancy parties and celebrity names in her address book, Combette actually appears to gain very little in comparison to the publishing

---

<sup>500</sup> Makward, *Mayotte Capécia*, p. 218.

<sup>501</sup> Lejeune, *Je est un autre*, p. 252.

house from the publication of her books and it would not be hyperbole to say that Corrêa exploited her.

Whilst the translation of her identity from Martinican laundress to Parisian novelist is arguably the most important self-translation that Combette undertakes, the continued conflation of fact of Combette's life and the fiction of Capécia's is erroneous, including that of her 'need' to assimilate into French culture in order to feel truly 'accepted', such as Fanon purported. Rather, the radical translation of her identity demonstrates her remarkable resilience and aptitude for *débrouillardise*. Indeed, Arnold describes Combette as, 'intelligente, débrouillarde, ayant beaucoup de prestance'<sup>502</sup> and whether by accident or design, the fact that her own life experience partly creates a framework for fiction, she manages to subvert the common stereotypes for women of her age, class, race and nationality and creates a space for herself in opposition to, yet within, what could be described as a hostile social system, inappropriate for her and her family's needs. Burton states that *débrouillardise* is 'the strength of the weak, the only way in which the chronically disempowered can survive and turn the system that oppresses them against itself and use it to their own advantage,'<sup>503</sup> and, although only partly responsible for them, what Combette achieves with the success of her novels is precisely a manifestation of this definition.

The duality of identity, and the challenges that are part of translating a multilingual text from a Caribbean context, are examined at length by Marie-José

---

<sup>502</sup> Arnold, 'Frantz Fanon, Lafcadio Hearn et la supercherie de "Mayotte Capécia"', p. 149.

<sup>503</sup> Burton, 'Debrouya Pa Peche, Or Il y a Toujours Moyen De Moyenner: Patterns of Opposition in the Fiction of Patrick Chamoiseau', p. 468.



N’Zengou-Tayo and Elizabeth Wilson. Although they acknowledge the fact that, ‘it is never easy to translate the polyphonic nature of a Caribbean text’, they also note that, ‘in recent years, there has been a trend to accept the opacity of the source text and to convey that opacity in the translation.’<sup>504</sup> By translating vernacular language in the text with an anonymous American linguistic idiom, Stith Clark resists the opportunity to convey both a greater level of opacity and the multifaceted identity of writer, protagonist and text. Furthermore, her choice of a higher register in translation foregrounds the dominant position the target language culture appears to occupy in her work, and as a result, the ethnographic element that could be read in the text is diminished. Stith Clark has clearly understood the text, but has not translated it in the deeper sense of, ‘from one language to another, across power differentials marked off by the concept of ‘first world’ and ‘third world’.’<sup>505</sup> By translating in this way and disregarding the importance of the power differential in socio-political relationships between first and third world countries, she therefore maintains a hierarchy between source and translated text and privileges the experience of the Anglophone first world readership over the needs of the Francophone Martinican author and the integrity of her novel. Furthermore, this translation strategy broadly conforms to Jacquemond’s concept of translation across power differentials, which Robinson summarizes as,

a dominated culture [which is] represented in a hegemonic culture in translations that are (1) far fewer in number than their counterparts in the opposite direction, (2) perceived as difficult and only of interest to specialists, (3) chosen for their conformity to hegemonic stereotypes and (4) often written specifically with an eye to conforming to those stereotypes and thus getting translated and read in the hegemonic culture.<sup>506</sup>

---

<sup>504</sup> Marie-José N’Zengou-Tayo and Elizabeth Wilson, ‘Translating the Other’s Voice: When is Too Much Too Much?’ in, *Writing and Translating Francophone Discourse: Africa, The Caribbean, Diaspora*, ed. by Paul F. Bandia (Amsterdam and New York: Rodopi, 2014), pp. 127-151 (p. 134).

<sup>505</sup> Robinson, *Translation and Empire*, p.3.

<sup>506</sup> Ibid. p.32.

Apart from an explanation of register, Stith Clark provides nothing in the way of a translation strategy in the accompanying introductory essay to the texts. However, the fact that she felt an understanding of Capécia's story, in terms of her own, possibly influenced her decision to render Caribbean speech patterns<sup>507</sup> with 'the equivalent of the American linguistic idiom [...] with the intention of lowering the barriers between cultures and interpreting the writer's implied class distinction.'<sup>508</sup> Problematically, however, she does not extrapolate on her definition of 'American linguistic idiom' (presumably there exists more than one form of linguistic idiom in a country as varied and diverse as America) nor does she explore the use of Creole in the source language text, and what this would mean for her in terms of her translation strategy (in the text, she tends to leave Creole utterances in their original language, with an English translation provided afterwards). In so doing, although she claims a form of affinity with Mayotte Capécia (the writer) because of her own upbringing, Stith Clark still misunderstands and undermines the duality of the two identities at play in Capécia's work and in her character in *Je suis Martiniquaise* (caught between the Creole of her youth and her yearning to join the French of the dominant society).

The ignorance of a key socio-linguistic component of the text, and the unexplained use of the American idiom demonstrates the presence of an (un)conscious and clear power differential maintained between the writer and the translator, despite the fact that the translator claims to understand something of

---

<sup>507</sup> For example, the speech modification was often indicated with a disappearance of intervocal 'r's in the source text, a practice roundly criticized by Jenny Alpha as essentialising at the time of original publication.

<sup>508</sup> Capécia, 'I Am a Martinican Woman' and 'The White Negress', trans. Beatrice Stith Clark, pp. 19-20.

the writer's life because of her own upbringing in Chicago. This power differential tipped in favour of the American translator means that she chooses a policy of domestication in her work. Stith Clark claims to '[lower] the barriers between cultures' in her translation, which suggests that her work would permit a sense of reciprocity and commingling of source and target language linguistic and cultural references between the two texts, maintaining the 'foreign' in translation and a sense of the opacity of the work (recalling something of the rhizomatic theory of translation put forward in Chapter 3). Despite writing that her work is an act of, 'lowering the barriers between cultures', in a similar vein to Markmann, Stith Clark instead translates the novels using culturally specific vocabulary and situates the social class dynamic within a linguistic framework that the target language readership might understand, rather than establishing a relationship of reciprocity. Considering the context in which these novels were first translated into English (mid-1990s America), it is necessary to bear in mind that the target language readership may have had little to no understanding of the Martinican setting of the stories (mid-1940s, in the context of World War Two, when Martinique was gripped by trade and goods embargoes imposed by Allied forces). Therefore, to attempt to translate them in a relatively modern, American, idiomatic way may well have rendered the text more accessible to the intended readership, and Stith Clark provides a short glossary at the end of the text, which contains explanations of some of the text's more culturally specific terms. Yet, this does not preclude the fact that a translation foregrounding strategies of linguistic hybridity and opacity could be possible, using more culturally sensitive idiomatic phrases; it merely underscores the fact that the needs of the target language readership have been privileged

over those of the source language text. Here, the questions raised when considering the merits of a domesticated translation against one which foreignizes and foregrounds the fact that the novel is set in a place or time ‘other’ to the readership’s own sphere of understanding are similar to those encountered in Chapter 2, in the examination of Charles Lam Markmann’s translation of Fanon’s *Peau noire, masques blancs*.

Stith Clark’s broadly domesticating translation strategy is not always consistent. Her stated aim was to translate by employing an American linguistic idiom (although she does not specify any further what she might mean by this), rather than using ‘standard’ English (this in itself is something of a nebulous concept, is she suggesting that she will use American ‘standard’ English, or British ‘standard’ English?), which she offered as the alternative. Yet, her translation often falls between these two categories. Early in the text, young Mayotte is talking to the French curé on whom she has something of a childish crush. When he presents her with an image of the Virgin Mary some days before her final communion examination, in her excitement, she uses the ‘tu’ form to refer to him, rather than the more formal and appropriate ‘vous’ (‘Non, fis-je précipitamment, craignant de l’avoir blessé, je veux bien celle que tu as fait pour moi. Comment m’était-il arrivé de le tutoyer? J’étais si confuse que je n’osai plus le regarder’<sup>509</sup>). Stith Clark renders Mayotte’s conversation with him as, ““No,” I said precipitately, afraid of hurting him, “I really want the one that thou did for me.” How did I come to use the *thou* form? I was so ashamed that I

---

<sup>509</sup> Cottias and Dobie, *Relire Mayotte Capécia*, pp. 81-82.

dared not look at him.’<sup>510</sup> Whilst ‘thou’ might be an informal manner of addressing a person, it is informal within the context of very archaic English, thus effectively cancelling out the informal tone she hoped to achieve in differentiating between the two forms of ‘you’ that exist in French.

Lafcadio Hearn used this form of address when transcribing dialogue in the stories ‘Les Porteuses’ and ‘Ti Canotié’ found in the collection *Two Years in the French West Indies*, originally published in 1890. The story of ‘Ti Canotié’ is of two young Martinican boys whose small boat drifts out to sea, and Hearn translates the Creole interactions between the boys into English as follows: “‘- *Ou ka pagayé!- ou ka menti!* (Thou art paddling! – thou liest!) vociferated Maximilien... ‘And the fault is all thine. I cannot, all by myself, make the canoe to go in water like this! The fault is all thine. I told thee not to dive, thou stupid!’”<sup>511</sup> Considering the role that Hearn’s text played in the development of *Je suis Martiniquaise* as a publishable text, it is possible that Stith Clark may have referred to it in researching her translation of the novel and felt that it might allow better differentiation between the use of ‘tu’ and ‘vous’ in standard French, and Creole and standard French in the novel, without fully considering the consequences of this choice on the perceptions of the tone and register of the translated text when published in 1997.

Furthermore, in the above extract, Stith Clark’s use of ‘precipitately’ seems a rather literal, and again, archaic rendering of ‘*précipitamment*’ which could have

---

<sup>510</sup> Capécia, ‘*I Am a Martinican Woman*’ and ‘*The White Negress*’, trans. Beatrice Stith Clark, p. 53.

<sup>511</sup> Lafcadio Hearn, *Two Years in the French West Indies* (Oxford: Signal Books, 2001), p. 233 (emphasis in original).

been translated in a more colloquial manner, such as ‘hurriedly’ or ‘in a rush’, which may better suit the manner in which a child might speak. Stith Clark’s translation strategy conflicts with the translation she produces. Whilst she attempts to produce a translation that relies on idiom to convey a sense of authenticity to the tone of the text, her intentions are blurred by the manner in which she translates, because her use of ‘thou’, although reaching for an informal meaning, inadvertently elevates the text to a register far beyond that of the source language text, because of modern misrepresentations of the register of that form of address.

This combination of high and low registers is noted again when Mayotte makes her first trip to Fort-de-France and observes some beggars in the street, with the source text reading,

la seule ombre à mon bonheur était la vue de quelques malheureux mendiants en guenilles, assis au bord du trottoir, les pieds enflés, qui tendaient aux passants des petits pots, en leur demandant, d’une voix gutturale, au nom de la Sainte Vierge, d’y mettre quelques sous. Sans eux, je me serais crue au Paradis.<sup>512</sup>

Stith Clark writes,

The only flaw in my happiness was the sight of those wretched beggars holding out their cups to passers-by, pleading in guttural tones and in the name of the Holy Virgin, to put a few pennies therein. Without them, I would have believed myself in Heaven.<sup>513</sup>

The use of ‘therein’ and the construction of the final sentence, ‘I would have believed myself in Heaven’ again serves to elevate the tone of the text above what one might have expected, considering the social background of the protagonist, and as a result, the text at times can appear somewhat unconvincing.

---

<sup>512</sup> Cottias and Dobie, *Relire Mayotte Capécia*, p. 120.

<sup>513</sup> Capécia, ‘*I Am a Martinican Woman*’ and ‘*The White Negress*’, trans. Beatrice Stith Clark, p. 95.

As we can see from these extracts, the register of the target language text is often much more formal than that of the source language text, perhaps belying the translator's own scholarly background. Whilst Stith Clark does use a more colloquial style successfully in dialogue, usually in conversations between Mayotte and Francette (her sister), Rènélise (her father's girlfriend), or Loulouze (her friend), it can jar with the other inflated register, in terms of its sound patterns. For example, a colloquial tone is very clear in the following conversation between Rènélise and Mayotte, "Who cares about tomorrow? I ain't immortal and you oughta learn we can't order what's already done." "What's done," I repeated with scorn, "Ain't you ashamed to talk like that?"<sup>514</sup> (Qu'impo'te pou' demain. Je ne suis pas immo'telle, il faut que vous sachiez qu'on ne peut pas commander à ce qui est éc'it. – Ce qui est éc'it, répétais-je avec mépris, n'avez-vous pas honte de pa'ler ainsi?"<sup>515</sup>). Thus, the imbalance in tone serves only to recall the implicit power differential in the dynamic between writer and translator.

This style of translation makes it hard to assess the source text and its target language version and their relationship to one another beyond the usual framework of binary opposition: foreignizing/domesticating, periphery/centre and dominated/dominating cultures. It requires the translation to fit into a scheme unsuited to the specific demands of a Caribbean multilingual text in translation, overlooking its inherent hybridity and plurality. Finally, it also refuses the idea of translation being not only a means of transferring meaning, but also specifically a site of exchange, and developing equality, between two

---

<sup>514</sup> Capécia, 'I Am a Martinican Woman' and 'The White Negress', trans. Beatrice Stith Clark, p. 86.

<sup>515</sup> Cottias and Dobie, *Relire Mayotte Capécia*, p. 112.

linguistic and cultural systems. Bandia sees translation as a means of crossing geographic and literary boundaries, describing it as, ‘a pathway to mediation or bridging the gap between the metropole and its peripheries, and between the various cultures that make up the francophonie,’<sup>516</sup> it plays a particularly important role in postcolonial discourses, ‘which are steeped in hybrid aesthetic practices, which have rendered such boundaries obsolete, and call attention to hybridity as an active site of cultural production.’<sup>517</sup> Stith Clark’s translation does not seek to bridge the gap between the metropole and its peripheries, but rather turns the reader’s attention away from the Francophone context and toward that of the translation’s focus of America, provoked by the choice of linguistic register.

## Conclusion

In the preface to Makward’s text, Jack Corzani, suggests that in reality, it does not matter who wrote *Je suis Martiniquaise* and *La Négrresse blanche*, echoing Arnold’s thoughts on the plagiarism of Lafcadio Hearn in *Je suis Martiniquaise*. For Corzani, the publishers’ exploitation of Combette is the lasting legacy of the novels, noting that,

la seule évidence, qui s’impose à la lecture des manuscrits de Lucette Céranus Combette, est que si cette dernière a certes pu raconter une histoire, ‘son’ histoire, elle n’a jamais pu la rédiger elle-même.<sup>518</sup>

The experience demonstrates, more broadly, the constraints still in place for women, especially black women from the ex-colonies, seeking to break out of

---

<sup>516</sup> Bandia, ‘Introduction’, in *Writing and Translating Francophone Discourse*, p. 2.

<sup>517</sup> Ibid. p. 13.

<sup>518</sup> Jack Corzani, ‘Préface’, in Makward, *Mayotte Capécia*, p. 10.



the position prescribed for them by society. Whilst Combette herself offered the initial text and copy of André's memoirs to Edmond Buchet of Corrêa, the act of a group of (probably) male publishers and copy writers taking Combette's childhood memories and intimate memoirs and refashioning them, alongside literature taken from other sources, is aggressively colonial, and reinforces the patriarchal hierarchies in place in 1940s/1950s France. Removing Combette's authorial agency, those on the inside of society maintained her liminal position, neither fully assimilated into French society, nor entirely part of the Martinican, and any attempt at total assimilation is never realized. Capécia's lack of agency in the construction of the novel also removes the possibility for this novel to be read as an autoethnographic examination of life in Martinique because the extent of her contribution is virtually unknowable. Yet, the ethnographic potential of the novels still persists (in terms of its scientific meaning of describing people and their customs, traditions and differences), for they allow the reader to glimpse a moment in Caribbean history, sketched out using Combette's personal memories and memoirs, and layered with Hearn's historical understanding, and indeed, ethnographic examination of the island. However, the impossibility of presenting Capécia as an 'everywoman' character is clear - far from representing all Caribbean women's experiences, the extent to which these novels portray even one woman's life remains questionable.

The privileged position that the target language and the needs of the target language readership holds in Stith Clark's translation problematizes this multi-authored text and reinforces boundaries between languages and cultures, rather than allowing the cultural identities of both source and translation text to inform

the other. Simon rightly argues that, 'translation, by its very nature of exchanging ideas between two cultural poles, is inherently and perpetually incomplete'<sup>519</sup> and this process of exchange is thwarted in *I am A Martinican Woman*. Stith Clark refuses a translation that takes into account the gender of either writer (because she understands Mayotte Capécia to be the only writer of the text) or translator, nor does she draw on her own childhood in her work to provide a translation of true cultural hybridity, thus allowing her translation to become, 'an activity which destabilizes cultural identities, and become the basis for new modes of cultural creation.'<sup>520</sup> The examples of stiff translations which literally render the meaning, but not the local sense or colour of the words show that Stith Clark falls short of a coherent rendering of the social context of *Je suis Martiniquaise*, because, 'the solution to many of the translator's dilemmas are not to be found in dictionaries, but rather in an understanding of the way language is tied to local realities, to literary forms and to changing identities.'<sup>521</sup> The use of a translation methodology unsuited to the text mirrors the original appropriation of the text for commercial gain, and the dominance of the ruling French system, and perhaps in this case, that of the Anglophone publishing market.

Despite developing and detailed scholarship from the likes of Christiane Makward and Cottias and Dobie moving on the debate about Mayotte Capécia, we can still only grasp at the person Lucette Céranus Combette/Mayotte Capécia really was. She was caught between her life before and after moving to Paris,

---

<sup>519</sup> Simon, *Gender in Translation*, pp. 164-165.

<sup>520</sup> Ibid. p. 135.

<sup>521</sup> Ibid. p. 138.

never fully able to exit the liminal space between her old Caribbean life and her new existence in France. Her skills in *débrouillardise* and managing to survive, and at times thrive, in very different circumstances and geographic locations, and demonstrates her desire to escape her successive time and culturally bound habitus. However patriarchal and colonial attitudes persist towards her not only in her life in Martinique but also, following her move to Paris. Therefore, she is repeatedly thwarted in her attempts to translate herself into a different social and cultural habitus, both during her life (principally by the patriarchal, post-colonial society she inhabited), and how she is portrayed in translation and criticism in her literary afterlife. She lives on in the minds of readers today still in the way she has been presented by others, rather than in the way she sought to present herself. Therefore, a sense of acting as both the outsider and also liminally characterizes her life, and literary activities, yet this rich seam of enquiry is never entirely mined in terms of the translation of her work. Foregrounding the liminality in Combette/Capécia's life, and that of her protagonists, emphasizing their *débrouillardise* and ability to make a life for themselves, in between the distinct Creole and French cultural systems would be a productive and worthwhile route into revising the English translation of Capécia's novels. Translation theorists have sought for many years to move away from binary appreciations of source and target language, and the attempt to break down the established, often one-directional, relationship between centre and periphery is particularly pertinent, and I would argue, necessary, in terms of translation of postcolonial, or Caribbean literature.

## Conclusion

The aim of this thesis was to explore how a French Caribbean identity is portrayed in English translations, and determine if, and the extent to which, it differed significantly from that of the source text. To do this necessitated a practical examination of the intersection between Translation Studies and Postcolonial Studies by exploring translation strategies employed by translators of, in the main, well-known literature by Martinican writers and the overarching translation theory to which these strategies appeared to adhere. The corpus writers of Frantz Fanon, Patrick Chamoiseau and Mayotte Capécia were chosen for a number of reasons. Although all three writers were born in Martinique, their experience of the island and, in turn, that of France was extremely varied, yet similar questions of identity are central to each writer's work. Each of them seeks to address the question of how personal, social and cultural identity may be created or condemned, whether Martinican or Algerian (in the case of Fanon's studies) and often in relation to France. Their work is also written from different perspectives, that of the educated psychologist, the culturally and linguistically curious 'word scratcher' and the disempowered female writer, making a living for her family. This is reflected in their use of language, and in particular, that of Fanon and Chamoiseau, which permits us to examine the different ways in which language can be appropriated and/or altered to suit the development of a particular identity.

My work in the thesis is also deeply influenced by the cultural turn in Translation Studies of the early 1990s and shaped my argument for the central position that culture (both source and target language) must occupy in a translator's mind

when working. Whilst it is important to acknowledge the debt Translation Studies owes to Cultural Studies and European philosophy in the development of the main translation theories of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, it is also important to recognize that the practical process of translation was increasingly no longer at the heart of the project (even though play with language, specifically in the work of Derrida, still featured heavily<sup>522</sup>). As far back as 1991, Douglas Robinson was calling for a return to translation that engaged more meaningfully with what it means – practically – to translate. In Chapters 2 and 3, in particular, I aimed to demonstrate the need for a return to a focus on the practical application of translation theory, which is supported by Robinson's assertion that,

It is no longer necessary for the theorist to assume that he or she can only be useful to translators by laying down the law – or, for that matter, to assume that there is no need to be useful to translators at all, that it is enough to spin out elaborate mathematical descriptions of translation in the abstract that have a certain notational beauty but are of no use to anybody. It is time to offer translators tools, not rules – and tools derived not from Christian theology and the dogmatic demands placed on Bible translating, as has largely been the case in Western translation theory, but from what translators actually do when they translate. In that sense, in fact, the translator's turn also becomes the theorist's turn: our turn to shrug off the role of secularized priests, and the exclusive priestly rules and restrictions we have thought it our task to deliver, and to mingle with the laity that we actually are.<sup>523</sup>

I attempt in my work to begin to readdress the balance between theory and the practicality of its application and to explore translation theories that offer new ways of approaching the complexities of French Caribbean literature in translation. Therefore, my research focused on a text-based analysis of several prevalent Western translation theories, predominantly assessing the extent to which these theories were successful when used to examine French Caribbean texts translated into English, and how these translations may (or may not) have

---

<sup>522</sup> See in particular Jacques Derrida, 'Qu'est-ce qu'une traduction "relevante"?' in *Quinzième Assises de la traduction littéraire (Arles 1998)* (Arles: Actes Sud, 1999), pp. 21-48.

<sup>523</sup> Douglas Robinson, *The Translator's Turn* (Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1991), p. xvi.

portrayed the identity of the text in the target language translation. I chose to map key Western translation theories onto the translations of these corpus texts, in order to think about how often commonly accepted Western concepts of translation relate to literature of a Caribbean origin and if, and how, appropriate these strategies are in dealing with this literature.

In chapter 2, I set out to explore if, and how, popular dualistic translation strategies (namely those of Lawrence Venuti – domestication/foreignization – and Gideon Toury – adequate/acceptable), that view the source and target language texts as distinct entities and translation as a process of exchange or travel between the two, are still appropriate when translating texts of a different cultural provenance. As it rapidly becomes clear, linguistic equivalence, or value equivalence is only part of translation, and in Chapter 2 I begin my argument that cultural consideration should occupy a central position when approaching foreign language texts, and reading them in both their original language and translations. This is a core argument for the thesis and is emphasized throughout. Therefore, in Chapter 3, the attention begins to shift from linguistic aspects of translation, to a deeper consideration of translation from a cultural viewpoint and paves the way for a more ethnographic and metaphorical examination of the process and product of translation in Chapter 4. In the final chapter, I choose to approach translation from a more creative perspective, with Mayotte Capécia's novellas providing the literary focus (chosen because of her rise to infamy due to the comments made by Fanon about her work, and as a consequence, her Self, alongside the fact that these comments were made in ignorance) to establish the extent to which a metaphorical appreciation of translation could be viewed as a

process of self-reinvention through the author's selection of the autobiographical elements that are presented to his or her audience, or through the way in which an author's work is modified by publishing editors.

I found in answer to my research questions that, broadly, translators still often revert back to established Western translation theories in their work, whether consciously or unconsciously (and, in the case of those who provided Translator's Notes, despite perhaps having stated that they would be doing otherwise). A privileging of target language cultural norms, and the needs of the target language readership (or, indeed, the demands of the publishing market) frequently supersede those of the source language author and text, despite the fact that the target language text is often considered as something that attempts to imitate the source language text. This had the effect of layering target language (i.e., Anglo-American, Western) preconceptions about what French Caribbean literary and cultural identity is upon the real identity of the author and text, and therefore reinforcing, rather than reversing, the process of 'Othering' set in motion by colonialism. The changes incurred in the translations ranged from the benign to the controversial. While some translators successfully engaged with the cultural difference inherent in the text, others' attempts to do so resulted in only pushing the target and source language works further apart and continuing to foreground the reading experience of the target language audience. Some translated the texts with a clear personal or political agenda, and, specifically in the cases of Fanon and Capécia, the work of translators and editors contributed to radical reinterpretations of both source language texts, the author and their intentions, which in Fanon's case, are only recently beginning to be readjusted

with the publication of Richard Philcox's translations and growing scholarship in the area.

With reference to specific chapters, in Chapter 2, I explore a movement from binary translation strategies (Venuti's notion of 'domesticating/foreignizing' translation, and Toury's concept of 'adequate/acceptable' translations) to Pym's concept of intercultural translation, which demands that the translator and the reader work within the space created by the needs of both the source and target language culture and sees equivalence as based on the value of the work as a whole, rather than the precise meaning of each word. I conclude that whilst the translation strategies employed by Markmann permitted Fanon's work to reach a much broader American audience, it was at the cost of a true picture of Fanon, for the translations portrayed very different versions of the identity of the text, and of Fanon himself. This in turn demonstrates the power of market forces in terms of how foreign language texts and authors are manipulated to appeal to particular target market demographics.

Moreover, the manner in which Fanon's work has been translated has led to an increased particularization in the reception of his work, focusing often on the violence that he is supposed to have advocated in *Les Damnés de la terre*. Coupled with the fact that target language readers frequently fall into the trap of reading texts as if they are reading the source language texts it can be inferred that Fanon's identity and political and socio-cultural beliefs continue to be misrepresented and misinterpreted in translation. Therefore, placing cultural context at the core of understanding both source and target language texts is key



to completing a nuanced translation. Continuing to use binary translation theories (un)consciously encourages a perpetuation of viewing source and target language texts in opposition to each other, and consequently, hierarchically, with the dominant language text (here, English) taking precedence. Furthermore, by considering the relationship between source text and its translation(s) in a non-linear way, using a relational translation framework for example, the scope is broadened for thinking about the development of language and how the translations relate to the source text, its place of origin and destination.

I also found that although many of the translations I studied could still be described, at least in part, as adhering to traditional binary Western translation theories, no fully realized postcolonial translation theory has been put forward to offer an alternative solution. In Chapter 3, my findings suggest that the translators' frequent misuse of Creole in translation and an overreliance on paratextual elements (such as including extra footnotes and glossaries written by the translators) frustrate the possibility of constructing an interweaving Relational relationship between the source and target language texts. This then destroys the opacity so characteristic of Chamoiseau's literature and theory, and what could perhaps be considered so beguiling about reading foreign language literature in the first place. Bhabha's concept of the third space was used as a springboard into examining Relation and my decision to attempt to further develop the examination undertaken in Chapter 2 of Glissant's theory of Relation to explore translations of postcolonial French Caribbean literature was based upon Glissant's belief that the art of translation was the ultimate manifestation of Relation. Given the cultural and linguistic interconnectivity which underpins the

notion of Relation, and how Glissant saw the experience of Relation as one which deeply connects the Caribbean to different cultural, linguistic and geographical spaces within itself and to the rest of the world, it felt appropriate to explore if, and how, the theory could be applied practically to analyses of translation of Chamoiseau's texts. The choice of subject was due to the similarities and common themes in much of their literary and theoretical output. As the translation analysis of Chapter 3 shows, whilst in theory Relation appears to tessellate and fit together with the concept of a culture and dialogue based translation theory situated away from the current Western translation norms, as a poetics, it currently remains too underdeveloped to properly act as a practical theory of translation. It does however, point the way to perhaps a more creative and critical re-assessment of what translation entails, and with further research, might prove to be a fruitful entry point to examining Caribbean texts in translation; for, as my thesis demonstrates, it is necessary to situate linguistic interaction and interconnectivity in a third space between two languages that allows the translator to consider both the provenance and the destination of the text. It also suggests a possible endpoint of a radical revision of postcolonial translation theory, in that, by rhizomatically linking together source and target language texts, by and through the third space of linguistic newness between them, and thereby allowing a movement between the languages, the concept of source and target language texts may eventually be rendered obsolete, with translation instead producing almost a cyclical pattern which allows interaction between all versions of one text, both past and future.

The thesis also looks beyond the interlinguistic and intercultural appreciation of translation, and therefore the focus of Chapter 4 is a more metaphorical and creative interpretation of the term ‘translation’ to explore how a writer can re-imagine her Self, between that which she is, and that which she presents to the reader. It also looks closely at the problems provoked when an author loses authority over the text they produce, and who or what that finished text represents. An examination of Capécia’s life, how it influenced her literature, and her frustrated attempts to escape her liminal position between her life in Martinique and her new home in Paris is symbolic of the stymying of women’s ambitions and the perpetuation of hierarchical, patriarchal and colonial norms in 1950s France. The more powerful individuals who surrounded her thwarted her bid for cultural, sexual and economic autonomy in self-translation. Two main conclusions emerge from this chapter. Firstly, the fact that the American translator of her novellas, who published her work in 1997, chose to ignore growing scholarship informing us of the complexities of Capécia’s life when undertaking the translation recalls an almost colonial arrogance and hints at a belief of the superiority of the Western writer, which could hinder the possibility of a meaningful reassessment of Capécia’s work happening in English in the near future. It might not be outlandish to suggest that it is precisely because of this translation that Capécia has not found a wider Anglophone audience beyond the academy, despite the interest in her work that has been recently generated by Cottias, Dobié and Makward’s investigative biographical work in both French and English. Secondly, and perhaps more positively, the chapter suggests the possibility of looking at the word ‘translation’ more metaphorically, in terms of what can be achieved when the author sees himself or herself as a something to

be translated, both in life and art. Capécia's ability to adapt herself to her surroundings, her skill at 'débrouillardise', and learning the social codes necessary to access different areas of Martinican and French society is translation in the most physical sense. This self-translation and use of some autobiographical aspects, but not all, in her novellas point towards the development perhaps of auto-translation as a form of ethnography, shedding a light on her cultural surroundings and observing them from a liminal position. However, this position proves problematic given that her full potential for reinvention is shut down due to the multiple ways in which her work, and by extension, her Self, has been appropriated to suit other agendas (firstly, in the way that her novels were published, secondly, Fanon's use of *Je suis Martiniquaise* as a symbol of black women's 'mauvaise foi' and thirdly, by more contemporary feminist critics who have cherry picked aspects of her work to adhere to their narrative). This demonstrates the fact that, at times, the literary afterlife of a text takes on an identity much bigger, and changed, from that which the author intended (which could also be applied to readings of *Peau noire, masques blancs*), which is capable of shifting the text's meaning in an almost kaleidoscopic fashion.

My work contributes to the literature on Postcolonial Studies and Translation Studies, and the cross-section between them, by adding to the developing body of scholarship that calls for a less Western-centric vision of the Caribbean, and for a translation theory that reflects the cultural and linguistic plurality of the author's identity. It questions the fact that the use of binary translation theories which privilege the target language readership still persists, even in translations

which claim to encourage a cultural dialogue between the source and target language texts. In the Introduction, I acknowledge the position and usefulness of poststructural translation theory (specifically that of Derrida and Bhabha) as providing a meaningful way into considering the notion of the third space between the two texts in dialogue yet draw the conclusion that it is frequently too abstract for practical application. Much in the same way as theory of Relation is firmly rooted in abstract poetics, so the lack of a practical application could hinder a poststructuralist translation theory. My findings also argue that a translation theory built upon a dialogue between the source and target language text is most appropriate in the French Caribbean context, because it is necessary to create a text that responds to the plurality of both cultures and languages found in many of the corpus texts and, indeed, literature of the region. Borrowing the term from Bhabha, it must be written in the third space of ‘newness’ between the source and target language texts and become something entirely new itself, reflecting the hybridity of the source language text. Developing Pym’s concept of intercultural translation into the Caribbean context is important in doing so.

Although Martinique was broadly my principle focus for this study, my arguments concerning its literary output may be extrapolated out to encompass the whole Francophone Caribbean region. As a result, my work may be of interest to Postcolonial Studies and Translation Studies scholars, who may also want to work toward shifting the gaze of the English language translator so that they may understand Caribbean work from inside the region out, rather than from a Western perspective into the region – a viewpoint all too common in the literature I have studied. Continuing to emphasize the central position of culture

in translation is important, not only in properly revealing the source text in translation but also, to fail to do so is in many ways to reinforce the imperialist overtones that binary translation theories can (unwittingly) promote. As Eric Cheyfitz notes,

We must be in translation between cultures and between groups within our own culture if we are to understand the dynamics of our imperialism. For our imperialism historically has functioned (and continues to function) by substituting for the difficult politics of translation another politics of translation that represses these difficulties.<sup>524</sup>

The findings of my thesis also suggest that the revalorization of translation theory and, by extension, translations themselves, within the literary canon reinforces recent calls for a renegotiation for the position that the craft of translation occupies within academic institutions, and traces a similar route as Paul Bandia's work which acknowledges the hybridity inherent in Francophone language practices, yet at the same time notes the power differential that we seek to transcend in thinking about an alternative postcolonial translation theory which, 'has dictated, to a certain degree, the orientation of research in French and Francophone studies in the last few decades.'<sup>525</sup> My work also resonates with the main points of Bo Petterson's article, which was discussed in the Introduction, that we should carefully consider the role that 'theory' plays in 'translation theory' and the importance of refocusing our attention on the practice based task of translation. This view is also supported by Nicholas Harrison's recent manifesto on the work of translation as research.<sup>526</sup>

---

<sup>524</sup> Eric Cheyfitz, *The Poetics of Imperialism: Translation and Colonization from 'The Tempest' to 'Tarzan'* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), p. xvi.

<sup>525</sup> Bandia, 'Introduction', in *Writing and Translation Francophone Discourse*, p. 3.

<sup>526</sup> See Nicholas Harrison, 'World literature: What gets lost in translation?' in, *Journal of Commonwealth Literature*, 49.3 (2014), 411-426, and Nicholas Harrison, 'Notes on Translation as Research' in *Modern Languages Open*, 2015, doi:10.3828/mlo.v0i0.78 (accessed 01.02.2016).

French Caribbean texts have always been in a state of flux and translation, and it is the job of the translator to recognize this and the plural culture and identity from which the literature springs. The translator should view the work as a reciprocal movement from one language to another, taking place in a new space between the two while drawing from both the source and target languages to create the new translation whilst conscious of, and drawing upon, the cultural, social and political frameworks in which both texts operate. Developing the main strand of enquiry in my work, it is possible that this thesis may become the foundation of a study into examining how a practical Caribbean translation theory may be constructed, which builds on two key themes. Firstly, by drawing on Pym's intercultural translation theory, the notion of a cultural translation that on the one hand emphasizes the plurality inherent in much of Caribbean literature whilst on the other encourages a reading between source and target language text, and secondly, the importance of the need for a practically applicable solution, which I have underscored throughout the work. Translation Studies, too, has always also been in a state of flux, and indeed, translation, and will continue to shift according to cultural, linguistic, political and social change, and as interdisciplinary scholarship continues to grow. Douglas Robinson encompasses the complexity and opportunity inherent in the translator's task and demonstrates the necessity for continuing with it.

Translation in its multifarious social, cultural, economic and political contexts is impossibly more complex a field of study than abstract linguistic equivalence (which is already complex enough); but the chance of perhaps coming to understand how translation works in those contexts, how translation shapes cultures both at and within their boundaries, offers a powerful motivation to push on despite the difficulty of the undertaking.<sup>527</sup>

---

<sup>527</sup> Robinson, *Translation and Empire*, p. 79.

## Bibliography

### Primary Literature

Capécia, Mayotte, *Je suis Martiniquaise (extracts)* (Paris: Corrêa et Cie, 1948).

--, *I am A Martinican Woman & The White Negress, Two Novelettes of the 1940s by Mayotte Capécia*, trans. Beatrice Stith Clark (Pueblo, Colorado: Passeggiata Press, 1997).

Chamoiseau, Patrick, *Chronique des sept misères* (Paris: Gallimard, 1986).

--, *Solibo magnifique* (Paris: Gallimard, 1988).

--, *Texaco* (Paris: Gallimard, 1992).

--, *Écrire en pays dominé* (Paris: Gallimard, 1997).

--, *Texaco*, trans. Rose-Myriam Réjouis and Val Vinokurov (London: Granta Books, 1998).

--, *Chronicle of the Seven Sorrows*, trans. Linda Coverdale (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1999).

--, *Solibo Magnificent*, trans. Rose-Myriam Réjouis and Val Vinokurov (London: Granta Press, 1999).

Fanon, Frantz, *Peau noire, masques blancs* (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1952).

--, *Black Skin, White Masks*, trans. Charles Lam Markmann (New York: Grove Press, 1967).

--, *The Wretched of the Earth*, trans. Constance Farrington (London: Penguin, 2001).

--, *The Wretched of the Earth*, trans. Richard Philcox (New York: Grove Press, 2004).

--, *Black Skin, White Masks*, trans. Richard Philcox (New York: Grove Press, 2008).

--, *Les Damnés de la terre* (Paris: Éditions de la Découverte, 2011).



## Secondary Literature

Andrade, Susan Z., 'The Nigger of the Narcissist: History, Sexuality and Intertextuality in Maryse Condé's *Heremakhonon*', *Calaloo*, 16.1 (1993), 213-226.

Antoine, Régis, *La Littérature franco-antillaise: Haiti, Guadeloupe et Martinique* (Paris: Éditions Karthala, 1992).

Arendt, Hannah, *On Violence* (London: Allen Lane, The Penguin Press, 1970).

Arnold, A. James, 'Frantz Fanon, Lafcadio Hearn et la supercherie de 'Mayotte Capécia'', *Revue de littérature comparée*, 302 (2002), 148-166.

Arnold, D, L. Balkan, R. Lee Humphreys, S. Meyer and L. Sadler, *Machine Translation: An Introductory Guide* (Oxford: NCC Blackwell, 1994).

Ashcroft, Bill, Gareth Griffiths and Helen Tiffin, *The Empire Writes Back: Theory and Practice in Post-colonial Literatures* (London and New York: Routledge, 2004).

-- (eds.), *Post-Colonial Studies: The Key Concepts*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. (New York: Routledge, 2013).

Aub-Buscher, Gertrud and Beverley Omerod Noakes (eds.), *The Francophone Caribbean Today: Literature, Language, Culture* (Barbados, Jamaica, Trinidad & Tobago: University of West Indies Press, 2003).

Balutansky, Kathleen M. and Marie-Agnès Sourieau, *Caribbean Creolization: Reflections on the Cultural Dynamics of Language, Literature, and Identity* (Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 1998).

Bandia, Paul, 'Code Switching and Code-Mixing in African Creative Writing: Some Insights for Translation Studies', *TTR: traduction, terminologie, rédaction*, 9.1 (1996), 139-153.

--, 'Postcolonialism and translation: the dialectic between theory and practice', *Linguistica Antverpiensia*, 2 (2003) 129–142.

--, *Translation as Reparation: Writing and Translation in Postcolonial Africa* (Manchester and Kinderhook: St. Jerome, 2008).

--, 'Postcolonial literary heteroglossia: a challenge for homogenizing translation', *Perspectives: Studies in Translatology*, 20.4 (2012), 419-431.

-- (ed.), *Writing and Translating Francophone Discourse: Africa, The Caribbean, Diaspora* (Amsterdam and New York: Rodopi, 2014).

Bassnett, Susan and André Lefevere (eds.), *Translation, History and Culture* (London and New York: Pinter Publishers, 1990).

Bassnett, Susan, 'Writing in No Man's Land: Questions of Gender and Translation', *Ilha do Desterro*, 28 (1992), 63-73.

Bassnett, Susan and Harish Trivedi (eds.), *Post-colonial Translation: Theory and Practice* (London and New York: Routledge, 1999).

Batchelor, Kathryn, *Decolonizing Translation: Francophone African Novels in English Translation* (Manchester: St. Jerome, 2012).

--, 'Fanon: In and Through Translation' unpublished paper at University of Birmingham, 25.02.14.

--, 'The Mysterious Constance Farrington'  
<https://blogs.nottingham.ac.uk/clas/2013/08/06/the-mysterious-constance-farrington/> [accessed 25.02.14].

--, and Claire Bisdorff (eds.), *Intimate Enemies: Translation in Francophone Contexts* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2013).

Bergner, Gwen, 'Who is that Masked Woman? Or, The Role of Gender in Fanon's *Black Skin, White Masks*', *PMLA*, 110.1 (1995), 75-88.

Bermann, Sandra, 'Translation as Relation and Glissant's work', *CLCWeb: Comparative Literature and Culture* 16.3 (2014), 1-9.

Bernabé, Jean, Patrick Chamoiseau and Raphaël Confiant, *Éloge de la créolité – In Praise of Creoleness* (Paris: Gallimard, 1993).

Bhabha, Homi, *The Location of Culture* (London and New York: Routledge, 2004).

--, 'Framing Fanon', in Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, trans. Richard Philcox (New York: Grove Press, 2004), pp. vi-xli.

Bisdorff, Claire, 'French Caribbean "Prose d'idées" in Translation', *Interventions: International Journal of Postcolonial Studies*, 15.3 (2013), 332-348.

Bisland, Elizabeth, *The Life and Letters of Lafcadio Hearn* (Boston and New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1906).

Blanchard, Pascal, Nicolas Bancel and Sandrine Lemaire, *La Fracture coloniale* (Paris: Éditions la Découverte, 2005).

Bloom, Harold, Paul de Man, Jacques Derrida, Geoffrey H. Hartman and J. Hillis Miller, *Deconstruction and Criticism* (London and Henley: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1979).

Bongie, Chris, *Islands and Exile: The Creole Identities of Post/Colonial Literature* (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1998).

--, *Friends and Enemies: The Scribal Politics of Post/Colonial Literature* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2008).

Bourdieu, Pierre, *Language and Symbolic Power*, trans. Gino Raymond and Matthew Adamson (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1997).

Britton, Celia, *Édouard Glissant and Postcolonial Theory: Strategies of Language and Resistance* (Charlottesville and London: University Press of Virginia, 1999).

--, *The Sense of Community in French Caribbean Fiction* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2008).

--, *Language and Literary Form in French Caribbean Writing* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2014).

Britton, Celia and Richard Philcox, 'Frantz Fanon: Retrieving a Lost Voice', *Translation Review*, 71 (2006), 3-7.

Budick, Sanford and Wolfgang Iser (eds.), *The Translatability of Cultures: Figurations of the Space Between* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1996).

Burton, Richard D.E., 'Debrouya Pa Peche, Or Il y a Toujours Moyen de Moyenner: Patterns of Opposition in the Fiction of Patrick Chamoiseau', *Callaloo*, Vol. 16, No. 2 (1993), 466-481.

--, *La Famille Coloniale: La Martinique et la Mère Patrie – 1789 – 1992* (Paris: L'Harmattan, 1994).

Burton, Richard D.E. and Fred Reno (eds.), *French and West Indian: Martinique, Guadeloupe and French Guiana Today* (London and Basingstoke: Macmillan Press, 1995).

Butler, Judith and Joan W. Scott (eds.), *Feminists Theorize the Political* (London and New York: Routledge, 1992).

Carruthers, Janice and Maeve McCusker (eds.), *The Conte: Oral and Written Dynamics* (Bern: Peter Lang, 2010).

Centre Nationale de Ressources Textuelles et Lexicales,  
<http://www.cnrtl.fr/etymologie/case> [accessed 22.07.2015].

--, <http://www.cnrtl.fr/etymologie/assimiler> [accessed 16.12.2015].

Césaire, Aimé, *Cahier d'un retour au pays natal/Notebook of a Return to My Native Land*, trans. Mireille Rosello and Annie Pritchard (Newcastle: Bloodaxe Books, 2010).

--, *Discours sur le colonialisme, suivi de Discours sur la négritude* (Paris: Présence Africaine, 2011).

Chamoiseau, Patrick and Raphaël Confiant, *Lettres créoles: Tracées antillaises et continentales de la littérature, Haiti, Guadeloupe, Martinique, Guyane, 1635-1975* (Paris: Gallimard, 1999).

--, and Édouard Glissant, *Quand les murs tombent. L'identité nationale hors la loi?* (Paris: Galaade, 2007).

--, and Édouard Glissant, *L'intraitable beauté du monde, adresse à Barack Obama* (Paris: Galaade, 2009).

--, and Janice Morgan, 'Re-imagining Diversity and Connection in the Chaos World: An Interview with Patrick Chamoiseau' *Callaloo*, 31.2 (2008), 443-453.

Chancé, Dominique, *L'Auteur en souffrance* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 2000).

Chandler Caldwell Jnr., Roy, 'Creole Voice, Creole Time: Narrative Strategies in Chamoiseau's *Chronique des sept misères*', *Romance Quarterly*, 47.2 (2000), 103-111.

Cherki, Alice, *Frantz Fanon: A Portrait* trans. Nadia Benabid (New York: Cornell University Press, 2006).

Cheyfitz, Eric, *The Poetics of Imperialism: Translation and Colonization from 'The Tempest' to 'Tarzan'* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991).

Clifford, James and George E. Marcus, *Writing Culture: The Poetics and Politics of Ethnography* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1986).

Condé, Maryse, *En attendant le bonheur (Hérémakhonon)* (Paris: Éditions Robert Seghers, 1988).

--, 'Order, Disorder, Freedom and The West Indian Writer', *Yale French Studies*, Vol. 2, No. 83 (1993), 121-135.

--, 'Mode d'emploi: Comment devenir une écrivaine que l'on dit antillaise?' *Nouvelles Études Francophones*, 22.1 (2007), 47-51.

Cottias, Myriam, 'Esclavage, assimilation et dépendance: Essai sur une relation coloniale', *Les Cahiers du Centre de Recherches Historiques*, 40 (2007), 143-161.

--, and Madeleine Dobie, *Relire Mayotte Capécia: Une femme des Antilles dans l'espace colonial français (1916 – 1955), 'Je suis Martiniquaise' et 'La Négrresse blanche' (Textes intégraux)* (Paris: Armand Colin, 2012).

Cronin, Michael, *Translation in the Digital Age* (Oxford and New York: Routledge, 2013).

de Certeau, Michel, *L'Invention du quotidien, 1. Arts de faire* (Paris: Gallimard, 1990).

--, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, trans. Steven Rendall (Berkeley, Los Angeles and London: University of California Press, 1984).

Dash, J. Michael, *Édouard Glissant* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995).

--, *The Other America: Caribbean Literature in a New World Context* (Charlottesville and London: University Press of Virginia, 1998).

--, 'Postcolonial Caribbean Identities', in *The Cambridge History of African and Caribbean Literature*, Vol. 2 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 785–796.

Deleuze, Gilles and Félix Guattari, *Mille Plateaux: Capitalisme et Schizophrénie 2* (Paris: Les Éditions de Minuit, 1980).

--, *A Thousand Plateaus – Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, trans. Brian Massumi (London: The Athlone Press, 1988).

Deming Lewis, Martin, 'One Hundred Million Frenchmen: The "Assimilation" Theory in French Colonial Policy', *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 4.2 (1962), 129-153.

Derrida, Jacques, *Monolingualism of the Other; or, The Prosthesis of Origin*, trans. Patrick Mensah (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1998).

--, 'Qu'est-ce qu'une traduction "relevante"?', in *Quinzième Assises de la traduction littéraire (Arles 1998)* (Arles: Actes Sud, 1999), 21-48.

Derval, André, 'Les éditions Buchet-Chastel', *Les Carnets de l'IMEC*, 1, 2014, 30-31.

Drummond, Lee, 'The Cultural Continuum: A Theory of Intersystems', *Man*, 15.2 (1980), 352-374.

Enwezor, Okwui, (ed.) *The Short Century: Independence and Liberation Movements in Africa 1945-1994* (Munich, London and New York: Prestel, 2001).

Eyma, Xavier, *Les Peaux noires: Scènes de la vie des esclaves* (Paris: L'Harmattan, 2012).

Forsdick, Charles and David Murphy (eds.), *Francophone Postcolonial Studies: A Critical Introduction* (London: Arnold, 2003).

--, *Postcolonial Thought in the French-Speaking World* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2009).

Friel, Brian, *Translations* (London and Boston: Faber and Faber, 1981).

Gauvin, Lise, Cécile Van den Avenne, Véronique Corinus and Ching Selao (eds.), *Littératures Francophones: Parodies, pastiches, réécritures* (Lyon: ENS Éditions, 2013).

Genette, Gerard, *Paratexts: Thresholds of Interpretation*, trans. Jane E. Lewin, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997).

Gentzler, Edwin, *Contemporary Translation Theories*, Revised 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition (Clevedon et al.: Multilingual Matters Ltd, 2001).

Glissant, Édouard, *Le Discours antillais* (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1981).

--, *Poétique de la relation, Poétique III* (Paris: Gallimard, 1990).

--, *Introduction à une poétique du divers* (Paris: Gallimard, 1996).

--, *Traité du tout-monde, Poétique IV* (Paris: Gallimard, 1997).

--, *Poetics of Relation*, trans. Betsy Wing (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1997).

Grutman, Rainier, 'Beckett and Beyond: Putting Self-Translation in Perspective' *Orbis Litterarum*, 63.3 (2013), 188-206.

Haigh, Sam, (ed.), *An Introduction to Caribbean Francophone Writing: Guadeloupe and Martinique* (Oxford and New York: Berg, 1999).

--, *Mapping a Tradition: Francophone Women's Writing from Guadeloupe* (Leeds: Maney for the Modern Humanities Research Association, 2000).

Hantel, Max, 'Rhizomes and the Space of Translation: On Édouard Glissant's Spiral Retelling', *Small Axe*, 17.3 (2013), 100-112.

Harrison, Nicholas, 'World Literature: What gets lost in translation?', *The Journal of Commonwealth Literature*, 49.3 (2014), 411-426.

--, 'Notes on Translation as Research', *Modern Languages Open* (2015), doi:10.3828/mlo.v0i0.78 [accessed 01.02.2016].

Hearn, Lafcadio, *Two Years in the French West Indies* (Oxford: Signal Books, 2001, first published 1890).

Hewitt, Leah H., *Autobiographical Tightropes: Simone de Beauvoir, Nathalie Sarraute, Marguerite Duras, Monique Wittig and Maryse Condé* (Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 1990).

Hiddleston, Jane, 'Derrida, History and Autobiography', *French Cultural Studies*, 16.3 (2005), 291-304.

--, *Poststructuralism and Postcoloniality* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2010).

Higman, B.W., *A Concise History of the Caribbean* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011).

Hudis, Peter, *Frantz Fanon: Philosopher of the Barricades* (London: Pluto Press, 2015).

Idt, Geneviève, 'Fonction rituelle du métalangage dans les préfaces "hétérographes"', *Littérature*, 27 (1977), 65-74.

Irele, F. Abiola and Simon Gikandi (eds.) *The Cambridge History of African and Caribbean Literature*, Vol. 2 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004).

Kadish, Doris Y. (ed.), *Slavery in the Caribbean Francophone World: Distant Voices, Forgotten Acts, Forged Identities* (Athens and London: The University of Georgia Press, 2000).

Keith, M. and S. Pile (eds.), *Place and the Politics of Identity* (London and New York: Routledge, 1993).

Knepper, Wendy, *Patrick Chamoiseau: A Critical Introduction* (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2012).

Lejeune, Philippe, *Je est un autre: l'autobiographie de la littérature aux médias* (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1980).

Lionnet, Françoise, *Autobiographical Voices: Race, Gender and Self-Portraiture* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1989).

Loichot, Valérie, "'Devoured by Writing': An Interview With Gisèle Pineau" *Callaloo*, 30.1 (2007), 328-337.

Ludwig, Ralph, *Écrire la 'parole de nuit': La nouvelle littérature antillaise*, (Paris: Gallimard, 1994).

Macey, David, *Frantz Fanon: A Life* (London: Granta Books, 2000).

- Manguel, Alberto, 'King of the Wheelbarrows' (review of Patrick Chamoiseau's *Chronicle of Seven Sorrows*)  
<https://www.nytimes.com/books/00/01/16/reviews/000116.16manguet.html>  
 [accessed 06.04.16].
- Makward, Christiane F., *Mayotte Capécia, ou l'aliénation selon Frantz Fanon* (Paris: Éditions Karthala, 1999).
- Makward, Christiane and Odile Cazenave, 'The Others' Other: "Francophone" Women and Writing', *Yale French Studies*, 75 (1988), 190-207.
- McCusker, Maeve, *Patrick Chamoiseau: Recovery Memory* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2007).
- , 'On Slavery, Césaire and Relating to the World: An Interview with Patrick Chamoiseau', *Small Axe*, 13.3 (2009) 74-83.
- Merriam-Webster's Encyclopedia of Literature* (Springfield, MA: Merriam-Webster, Inc., 1995).
- Meylaerts, Reine, 'Habitus and self-image of native literary author-translators in diglossic societies' *Translation and Interpreting Studies*, 5.1(2010), 1-19.
- Michaels, Leonard, 'Mother Tongue' (review of Patrick Chamoiseau's *Texaco*)  
<https://www.nytimes.com/books/97/03/30/reviews/970330.30michaet.html>  
 [accessed 06.04.16].
- Miller, Christopher L., *The French Atlantic Triangle – Literature and Culture of the Slave Trade* (Durham, N.C., and London: Duke University Press, 2008).
- Milne, Lorna, *Patrick Chamoiseau: Espaces d'une écriture antillaise* (Amsterdam and New York: Rodopi, 2006).
- Moya Pons, Frank, *History of the Caribbean: Plantations, Trade and War in the Atlantic World* (Princeton, N.J.: Markus Wiener Publications, 2007).
- Munday, Jeremy, *Introducing Translation Studies: Theories and Applications* (London and New York: Routledge, 2001).
- Munro, Martin, 'Reading Rhythm and Listening to Caribbean History in Fiction by Jacques Roumain and Joseph Zobel' *Journal of Modern Literature*, 31.4 (2008), 131-144.
- Murdoch, H. Adlai, *Creole Identity in the French Caribbean Novel* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2001).
- Nesbitt, Nick, *Voicing Memory: History and Subjectivity in French Caribbean Literature* (Charlottesville and London: University of Virginia Press, 2003).



--, *Caribbean Critique: Antillean Critical Theory from Toussaint to Glissant* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2013).

Ngal, Georges, “*Lire...*” *Le Discours sur le Colonialisme d’Aimé Césaire* (Paris: Présence Africaine, 1994).

Ní Loingsigh, Aedín, *Postcolonial Eyes: Intercontinental Travel in Francophone African Literature* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2009).

Nirinjana, Tejaswini, *Siting Translation: History, Post-Structuralism and the Colonial Context* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1992).

N’Zengo-Tayo, Marie-José and Elizabeth Wilson, ‘Translators on a Tight Rope: The Challenges of Translating Edwige Danticat’s *Breath, Eyes, Memory* and Patrick Chamoiseau’s *Texaco*’, *TTR: Traduction, terminologie, rédaction*, 13.2 (2000), 75-105.

Palmié, Stefan and Francisco A. Scarano (eds.), *The Caribbean – A History of the Region and Its Peoples* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago, 2011).

Paravinishi-Gebert, Lizabeth, ‘Feminism, Race and Difference in the works of Mayotte Capécia, Michèle Lacroisil and Jacqueline Manicom’, *Callaloo*, 15.1 (1992), 66-74.

Pattano, Luigia, ‘Traduire la relation des langues: un entretien avec Édouard Glissant’ <http://mondesfrancophones.com/dossiers/edouard-glissant/traduire-la-relation-des-langues-un-entretien-avec-edouard-glissant/> [accessed 27.11.2013].

Petterson, Bo, ‘The Postcolonial Turn in Literary Translation Studies: Theoretical Frameworks Revisited’, [http://www.uqtr.quebec.ca/AE/vol\\_4/petter.htm](http://www.uqtr.quebec.ca/AE/vol_4/petter.htm) [accessed 16.10.2015].

Picanço, Luciano C., *Vers un concept de littérature antillaise martiniquaise* (New York: Peter Lang, 2000).

Pym, Anthony, *Translation and Text Transfer: An Essay on the Principles of Intercultural Communication* (Frankfurt am Main and Berlin: Peter Lang, 1992).

--, *Method in Translation History* (Manchester: St. Jerome, 1998).

--, *Exploring Translation Theories* (London and New York: Routledge, 2010).

--, *On Translator Ethics – Principles for Mediation between Cultures* (Amsterdam and Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing, 2012).

Raphael, Vincente, *Contracting Colonialism: Translation and Christian Conversion in Tagalog Society under Early Spanish Rule* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1988),

Reinhart, Catherine A., *Claims to Memory: Beyond Slavery and Emancipation in the French Caribbean* (New York and Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2006).

Ricœur, Paul, *On Translation*, trans. Eileen Brennan (London and New York: Routledge, 2006).

Robinson, Douglas, *The Translator's Turn* (Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1991).

--, *Translation and Empire: Postcolonial Theories Explained* (Manchester: St. Jerome, 1997).

--, *Western Translation Theory from Herodotus to Nietzsche* (Manchester: St. Jerome, 2007).

Sartre, Jean-Paul, *Réflexions sur la question juive* (Paris: Gallimard, 1954).

--, *Critique de la raison dialectique* (Paris: Gallimard, 1960).

--, 'Orphée noir', in Léopold Sédar Senghor (ed.), *Anthologie de la nouvelle poésie nègre et malagache de la langue française* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1969), pp. ix-xliv.

Schulte, Rainer and John Biguenet (eds.), *Theories of Translation: An Anthology of Essays from Dryden to Derrida* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1992).

Sharpley-Whiting, T. Denean, *Frantz Fanon: Conflicts and Feminisms* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers Inc., 1998).

Simon, Sherry, *Gender in Translation: Cultural Identity and the Politics of Transmission* (London and New York: Routledge, 1996).

Snell-Hornby, Mary and Zuzana Jettmarová and Klaus Kaindl (eds.), *Translation as Intercultural Communication: Selected Papers from the EST Congress – Prague 1995* (Amsterdam and Philadelphia: John Benjamins, 1995).

Sturge, Kate, *Representing Others: Translation, Ethnography and the Museum* (Manchester: St. Jerome, 2007).

Suk, Jeannie, *Postcolonial Paradoxes in French Caribbean Writing: Césaire, Glissant, Condé* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2001).

Syrotinski, Michael, *Deconstruction and the Postcolonial: At the Limits of Theory* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2007).

Tcheuyap, Alexie, 'Creole Mystification: Oral Writing in the Works of Patrick Chamoiseau and Simone Schwartz-Bart', *Research in African Literatures*, 32.4 (2001), 44-60.

Toury, Gideon, *In Search of a Theory of Translation* (Tel Aviv: The Porter Institute for Poetics and Semantics, 1980).

--, *Descriptive Translation Studies and Beyond* (Amsterdam and Philadelphia: John Benjamins, 1995).

Valens, Keja L., *Desire between Women in Caribbean Literature* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013).

Valensi, Lucette and Simone Delasalle, 'Le mot "nègre" dans les dictionnaires français d'Ancien régime: histoire et lexicographe', *Langue française*, 15 (1972), 79-104.

Venuti, Lawrence, *Rethinking Translation: Discourse, Subjectivity and Ideology* (London and New York: Routledge, 1992).

--, *The Translator's Invisibility: A History of Translation* (London and New York: Routledge, 1995).

--, *The Scandals of Translation: Towards an Ethics of Difference* (London and New York: Routledge, 1998).

-- (ed.), *The Translation Studies Reader* (Oxford and New York: Routledge, 2012, 3<sup>rd</sup> edition).

--, *Translation Changes Everything: Theory and Practice* (London and New York: Routledge, 2013).

Vergès, Françoise, 'Les troubles de la mémoire: Traite négrière, esclavage et écriture de l'histoire (Memory Troubles: Slave Trade, Slavery and History Writing)', *Cahiers d'Études Africaines*, 45.179/180 (2005), 1143-1178.

Von Flotow, Luise, *Translation and Gender: Translating in the 'Era of Feminism'* (Manchester: St. Jerome, 1997).

Wa Thiong'o, Ngũgĩ, *Decolonizing the Mind – The Politics of Language in African Literature* (London: James Currey, 1986).

Watts, Richard, *Packaging Post/Coloniality: The Manufacture of Literary Identity in the Francophone World* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2005).

Wells, Catherine, *L'Oralité dans 'Solibo Magnifique' de Patrick Chamoiseau* (Québec: GRELCA, Université Laval, 1994).

Wilder, Gary, *Freedom Time: Negritude, Decolonization and the Future of the World* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2015).

Wiley, Anne Elizabeth, 'The Yambo Ouologuem Reader: The Duty of Violence, A Black Ghostwriter's Letter to France, and the Thousand and One Bibles of Sex (Review)', *Research in African Literatures*, 40.1 (2009), 190-191.

Wilson, Rita and Leah Gerber (eds.), *Creative Constraints: Translation and Authorship* (Victoria: Monash University Publishing, 2012).

### **Other Works Consulted**

Apter, Emily, *The Translation Zone: A New Comparative Literature* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2006).

--, *Against World Literature: On The Politics of Untranslatability* (London and New York: Verso, 2013).

Bouvier, Pierre, Aimé Césaire, Frantz Fanon, *Portraits de décolonisés* (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 2010).

Chakrabarty, Dipesh, *Provincializing Europe: Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference* (Princeton, N.J., and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2000).

Chancé, Dominique, *Patrick Chamoiseau, écrivain postcolonial et baroque* (Paris: Champion, 2010).

Chevrier, Jacques, (ed.), *Poétiques d'Édouard Glissant* (Paris: Presses de l'Université de Paris-Sorbonne, 1999).

Clifford, James, *Routes: Travel and translation in the late twentieth century* (London and Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1997).

Condé, Maryse and Madeleine Cottenet-Hage (eds.), *Penser la créolité* (Paris: Éditions Karthala, 1995).

Condé, Maryse, 'The Stealers of Fire: The French Speaking Writers of the Caribbean and Their Strategies of Liberation', *Journal of Black Studies*, 2 (2004), 154-164.

Cronin, Michael, 'Altered States: Translation and Minority Languages', *TTR: traduction, terminologie, rédaction*, 8.1 (1995), 85-103.

--, *Translation and Globalization* (London and New York: Routledge, 2003).

--, *Translation and Identity* (London and New York: Routledge, 2006).

Crowley, Patrick and Jane Hiddleston (eds.), *Postcolonial Poetics: Genre and Form* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2011).

Dash, J. Michael, 'The World and the Word: French Caribbean Writing in the Twentieth Century', *Callaloo*, No. 34, 1988, 112-130.

Deleuze, Gilles and Félix Guattari, *Khafka – Toward a Minor Literature*, trans. Dana Polan (Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 1986).

Derrida, Jacques, 'Des Tours de Babel', in Joseph F. Graham (ed.), *Difference in Translation* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1985).

Duffus, Cheryl, 'When One Drop Isn't Enough: War as a Crucible of Racial Identity in the Novels of Mayotte Capécia', *Callaloo*, 28.4 (2005), 1091-1102.

Gallagher, Mary (ed.), *Ici-Là: Place and Displacement in Caribbean Writing in French* (Amsterdam and New York: Rodopi, 2003).

Gates Jnr., Henry Louis, 'Critical Fanonism', *Critical Inquiry*, 17.3 (1991), 457-470.

Gentzler, Edwin, *Translation and Identity in the Americas: New Directions in Translation Theory* (London and New York: Routledge, 2008).

Gibson, Nigel C. (ed.), *Living Fanon: Global Perspectives* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011).

Gilroy, Paul, *The Black Atlantic – Modernity and Double Consciousness* (London and New York: Verso, 1993).

Glissant, Édouard, *Mémoires des esclavages* (Paris: Gallimard/La Documentation française, 2007).

--, *La Terre, le feu, l'eau et les vents: Une anthologie de la poésie du Tout-Monde* (Paris: Galaade, 2010).

--, avec Alexandre Leupin, *Les Entretiens de Baton Rouge* (Paris: Gallimard, 2008).

Gosson, Renée K., 'For What the Land Tells: An Ecocritical Approach to Patrick Chamoiseau's *Chronicle of the Seven Sorrows*', *Callaloo*, 26.1 (2003), 219-234.

Hardwick, Louise (ed.), *New Approaches to Crime in French Literature, Culture and Film* (Oxford and Bern: Peter Lang, 2009).

Hargreaves, Alec G., (ed.) *Memory, Empire and Postcolonialism – Legacies of French Colonialism* (Oxford: Lexington Books, 2005).

Hargreaves, Alec G., Charles Forsdick and David Murphy (eds.), *Transnational French Studies, Postcolonialism and Littérature-monde* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2010).

Holub, Robert, *Reception Theory – A Critical Introduction* (London and New York: Methuen, 1984).

Hurley, E. Anthony, 'Intersections of Female Identity or Writing the Woman in Two Novels by Mayotte Capécia and Marie-Magdeleine Carbet', *The French Review*, 70.4 (1997), 575-586.

Iser, W., *The Act of Reading: A Theory of Aesthetic Response* (London and Henley, Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1978).

Jauss, H.R., *Toward an Aesthetic of Reception* (Sussex: The Harvester Press, 1982).

Khalfa, Jean, "'Corps Perdu", A Note on Fanon's Cogito', *Forum of Modern Language Studies*, 40.4 (2004), 426-437.

--, 'Frantz Fanon's *Black Skin, White Masks*: New Interdisciplinary Essays, ed. Max Silverman' (review), *The Modern Language Review*, 102.2 (2007), 527-528.

Laroche, Maximilien, *La Double scène de la représentation: Oraliture et littérature dans la Caraïbe* (Québec: GRELCA, Université Laval, 1991).

Lecerle, Jean-Jacques, *The Violence of Language* (London and New York: Routledge, 1990).

Mardorossian, Carine, 'From Fanon to Glissant: A Martinican Genealogy', *Small Axe*, 13.3 (2009) 12-24.

Moudileno, Lydie, *L'Écrivain antillais au miroir de sa littérature* (Paris: Éditions Karthala, 1997).

Munro, Martin and Elizabeth Walcott-Hackshaw (eds.), *Reinterpreting the Haitian Revolution and its Cultural Aftershocks* (Jamaica: University of the West Indies, 2006).

Munro, Martin and Celia Britton (eds.), *American Creoles: The Francophone Caribbean and the American South* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2012).

Nelson, Cary and Lawrence Grossberg (eds.), *Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1988).

N'Zengo-Tayo, Marie-José, 'Littérature et diglossie: créer une langue métisse ou la "chamoisification" du français dans *Texaco* de Patrick Chamoiseau', *TTR: Traduction, terminologie, rédaction*, 9.1 (1996) 155-176.

Parry, Benita, *Postcolonial Studies – A Materialist Critique* (London and New York: Routledge, 2004).

Polezzi, Loredana, 'Translation and Migration', *Translation Studies*, 5.3 (2012), 345-356.

Praeger, Michèle, 'Édouard Glissant: Towards a Literature of Orality', *Callaloo*, 1 (1992), 41-48.

Price, Richard (ed.), *Maroon Societies: Rebel Slave Communities in the Americas* (Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996, 3<sup>rd</sup> edition).

Réjouis, Rose-Myriam, 'Caribbean Writers and Language: The Autobiographical Poetics of Jamaica Kincaid and Patrick Chamoiseau', *The Massachusetts Review*, 44.1/2 (2003), 213-232.

Robinson, Cedric, 'The Appropriation of Frantz Fanon', *Race & Class*, 35.1 (1993), 79-91.

Rosello, Mireille, *Littérature et identité créole aux Antilles* (Paris: Karthala, 1992).

Rutherford, J. (ed.), *Identity: Community, Culture, Difference* (London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1990).

Said, Edward W., *The World, the Text and the Critic* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1983).

--, *Culture and Imperialism* (London: Vintage Books, 1994).

Salhi, Kamal, 'Re-thinking Francophone Culture: Africa and the Caribbean between History and Theory', *Research in African Literatures*, 35.1 (2004), 9-29.

Sartre, Jean-Paul, *L'Être et le Néant: Essai d'ontologie phénoménologique* (Paris: Gallimard, 1943).

--, *Qu'est-ce que la littérature?* (Paris: Gallimard, 1985).

--, *What is Literature?*, trans. Bernard Frechtman (London: Methuen & Co. Ltd., 1950).

--, *Colonialism and Neocolonialism*, trans. Azzedine Haddour, Steve Brewer and Terry McWilliams (London and New York: Routledge, 2006).

Snell-Hornby, Mary, *Translation Studies: An Integrated Approach* (Amsterdam and Philadelphia: John Benjamins, 1995).

Sparrow, Jennifer, 'Capécia, Condé, and the Antillean Woman's Identity Quest', *MaComère*, 1 (1998) 179-187.

Spivak, Gayatri Chakravorty, *Outside in the Teaching Machine* (London and New York: Routledge, 1993).

Steiner, George, *After Babel: Aspects of Language and Translation* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1992).

Terry, Richard, *The Plagiarism Allegation in English Literature from Butler to Sterne* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010).

Teverson, Andrew and Sara Upstone (eds.), *Postcolonial Spaces – The Politics of Place in Contemporary Culture* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011).

Williams, Patrick and Laura Chrisman (eds.), *Colonial Discourse and Post-Colonial Theory – A Reader* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994).

Young, Robert J.C., *Colonial Desire: Hybridity in Theory, Culture and Race* (New York and London: Routledge, 1995).

--, *Postcolonialism: An Historical Introduction* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2001).

--, *Postcolonialism: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003).

--, *White Mythologies: Writing History and the West* (New York and London: Routledge, 2004).



